Sir Charles Williamson Bt

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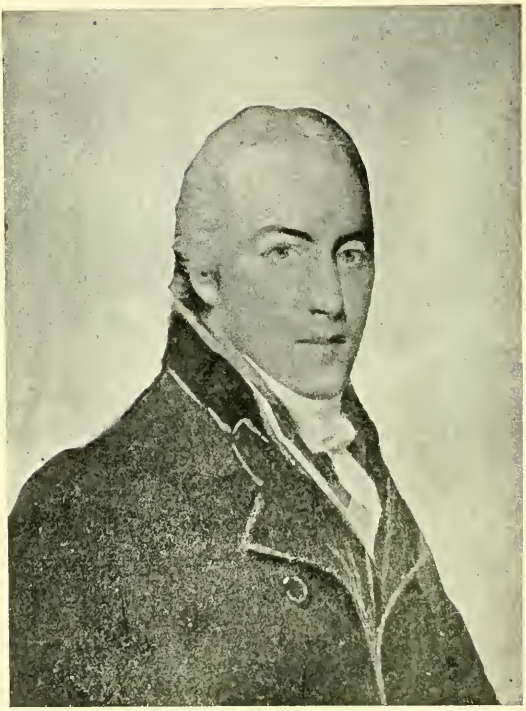
CHARLES WILLIAMSON



CHARLES WILLIAMSON.

[*Frontispiece*

CHARLES WILLIAMSON

A REVIEW OF HIS LIFE

EDITED BY

REV. WILLIAM MAIN, PERTH

From the Official Records of the Centennial Celebration of Bath, U.S., 1893

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PREFACE

THIS narrative of the life and work of Charles Williamson in relation to the County of Steuben and the Village of Bath, N.Y., has been compiled chiefly from the "Official Records of the Centennial Celebration of Bath, 1893." In that volume the article on Charles Williamson, by James M'Call, Esq., and the Historical Address, by the Hon. Ansel J. M'Call, have been the principal sources of information.

In addition, mention must be made of an appreciative Reminiscence of Charles Williamson which appeared in the *Bath Plaindealer* on March 7, 1885, and extracts from Mr. Turner's "History of the Phelps and Gorham Purchase," which have been made available.

Other items of information not thus obtained have been derived from old letters and papers which need not be more particularly enumerated.

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CHARLES WILLIAMSON

INTRODUCTION

MORE than a hundred years ago the spot on which the fair and prosperous town of Bath, New York, now stands, was the undisturbed abode of the fierce wolf and the prowling panther, the croaking raven and the dreary owl, the crawling serpent and other myriad denizens of Nature in her wildest state. The broad valley was covered with a dark and dense forest of oak and pine, unbroken in every direction. "The hill-tops were crowned with magnificent white pines, dark and sombre, adding at least a hundred feet to their apparent elevation." The native Indians, to whom the forests were as highways, had penetrated into that wild domain,

but the foot of the white man had never trod the wilderness way, and no human settlement was there.

To-day all this is changed. The pioneers of civilisation have long since cut their way through the pathless forest. The ringing axe has cleared the broad valley of its oaks and pines. The denizens of the forest have been exterminated. The crowning glory of the hill-tops is gone. And where Nature reigned in wild unconquered splendour the strong hand of civilisation has produced an ordered beauty. The wilderness and the solitary place have given place to rich harvest fields; the pathless forest has become a town of broad streets and spacious squares, with highways leading to other centres of civilised life and activity; where once the tall trees waved, churches and schools and stately mansions now stand; the busy hum of industry ascends where once only the sounds peculiar to Nature's solitude might have been heard; and men of intellect, energy, and skill, with fair women and merry children, live and rejoice there in the prosperity that has crowned the arduous, patient, and heroic labours of the man who laid the foundation of it all.

The name which must for all time be pre-eminently identified with this stupendous change is that of

Introduction

Charles Williamson, a Scotsman of keen insight and profound wisdom, of indomitable courage and untiring energy, who first saw the possibilities latent there, and strove with conspicuous success to make the possibilities actual.

The purpose of the following pages is to give the story of the pre-eminent part played by this man of outstanding qualities in the opening of a trackless forest to the foot of civilisation, and in the making of a town which still delights to do his memory honour as that of one to whom, under Providence, it chiefly owes its present fair and prosperous state.

CHAPTER I

BIRTH AND EARLY LIFE—MILITARY EXPERIENCE—A PRISONER OF WAR—MARRIAGE—SOJOURN IN SCOTLAND—FRIENDSHIP WITH WILLIAM PITT AND PATRICK COLQUHOUN—APPOINTED AGENT OF THE GENESEE TRACT

HARLES WILLIAMSON, to whose active and adventurous life, not only Bath owes its foundation, but all the fair region of Western New York is indebted for its rapid development and wonderful improvement, was born in Edinburgh, on the 12th July, 1757. He was the eldest of the three sons of Alexander Williamson, of Balgray, Dumfriesshire. Of the events of his early life there is no record, but doubtless the years of boyhood and youth were spent in the acquisition of an education in accordance with the station into which he had been born—an education of characteristic Scottish thoroughness, which developed the keen intellectual faculties for which he was so distinguished

in later days. No other circumstances, also, than those of that early time could have been better adapted for the life of energy and physical endurance which was afterwards to be his destiny. The free and open air existence which was characteristic of the son of a country gentleman was an invaluable training for one who was to be first a loyal soldier of his country and afterwards an intrepid pioneer amid the wastes of the Wild West.

Of the three sons of Alexander Williamson, two were destined for the army, and on the 8th March, 1775, at the age of eighteen, Charles was gazetted as ensign by purchase to the 25th Regiment of Foot. The 25th Regiment was known as the Edinburgh Regiment, and was commanded at that time by Lord George Henry Lennox. On June 4th, 1777, Williamson was promoted to the rank of lieutenant, a year later he became captain-lieutenant, and on January 17th, 1781, he was gazetted as captain—the familiar title by which he was afterwards known. The war of the Revolution which finally achieved the independence of America was then at its height. In 1778 France and Spain had leagued themselves with America against England, and France held the sea. The 25th Regiment was

despatched on active service to America, and while Captain Williamson, in company with a brother officer, was on his way from England to join his corps the ship in which he sailed was attacked by a French privateer near the American coast. Captain Williamson joined the sailors in defending the ship and was severely wounded, but all resistance was in vain. The vessel was captured, and Williamson, with the others on board, was seized as a prisoner of war. They were brought into Newburyport and thence transferred to the depôt at Boston. There, in that city of learning and culture, Captain Williamson, as a prisoner on parole, found a home in the house of Mr. Newell, whose daughter, Abigail, proved an accomplished companion and a tender nurse. For it happened that the captain fell ill, and Abigail, forgetting the antagonism of the nations at the sight of need, devoted herself so thoroughly to nursing the invalid that each grew to love the other's presence. Consequently when towards the end of 1781 an exchange of prisoners had been arranged and Captain Williamson, with liberty regained, resolved to set out for New York on his way to Scotland, Abigail Newell consented to accompany him, and at New London, Conn., on

December 2, 1781, they were married by a justice of the peace.

Immediately thereafter the young couple set sail for Scotland, where they remained for several years, Williamson having retired on half-pay. Their home was on a small family property near Dollar, Clackmannanshire, and there they lived for some time in the uneventful quiet of the home-life.

Again there is no definite record of the captain's experiences during the ten years that followed his return to Scotland. But from a passport which has been preserved and is now in the library at Bath, it appears that in 1784 he travelled in Germany, and in the same year he visited Constantinople, and made an overland journey from Constantinople towards Semlin in Hungary, of which a descriptive account is given in an interesting journal written by himself and still preserved.

In 1787 he was again in Scotland, and lived at Balgray, his father's estate in Dumfriesshire, with his wife and one or two children, for two or three years. On September 17, 1790, he was elected a burgess of Lochmaben.

About this time the attention of the capitalists of Europe was being attracted from the crowded land

ownership of the old world to the opportunities in the vast unsettled regions of the new. They placed their hope in the great, unopened resources of the wild lands of the West, and began those enterprises which have been the means of increasing so largely the world's prosperity and wealth.

During his first sojourn in America, Captain Williamson had not been unobservant of the hopeful condition of that country of embryonic greatness. He had returned to Scotland with his mind well furnished with information regarding the latent resources of America, and with fixed opinions on what might be achieved by the wisely ordered labours of bands of brave and energetic settlers. To him, therefore, the great capitalists of England turned as one who could speak with authority on their contemplated pioneering enterprises, and they eagerly sought his opinion and drew upon his stock of information.

His intellectual and fine social qualities attracted especially the attention of William Pitt, then Prime Minister of England, and Patrick Colquhoun, Sheriff of Westminster; and his acquaintance with those men of influence and power ripened into an intimacy which remained unbroken till death severed the ties of friend-

ship. When, therefore, about this time, Franklin, the agent of Robert Morris, the financier of the Revolution, sold by contract to an "Association," consisting of William Pulteney, William Hornby, and Patrick Colquhoun, the tract of land in Western New York, consisting of over 2,000,000 acres, or 3500 square miles, stretching from the Pennsylvania line to Lake Ontario, and from Seneca lake to the Genesee river, they turned at once to Captain Williamson as the man to carry out the scheme of settling the country and disposing of their purchase in allotments.

It required little persuasion to induce Williamson to accept the appointment of agent of the syndicate. His own desires made the opportunity thus afforded for pioneering work attractive, and the task was one for which he was peculiarly fitted. His education and physical training, his experience of military discipline, his courageous spirit and strength of endurance, his knowledge of men widened and deepened by travel, his business acumen and diplomacy, tact and courtesy, and an enthusiasm which was inspiring, all combined to mark him off as the *one* man who could successfully carry out the great enterprise with which he was now to be implicitly entrusted.

Having resolved to undertake the work, with characteristic energy he lost no time in beginning it. Repairing to Scotland, he settled his own affairs, selected a party of brave, ambitious, and intelligent Scotsmen to assist him in his new field ; and with these, among whom were John Johnson and Charles Cameron, and with his wife and children, bade farewell to his native land, and in the autumn of 1791 sailed for Norfolk, a city and seaport of Virginia.

There were no great steamships in those days as there are now, when the thousands of miles across the vast ocean can be traversed in a few brief days. Then the ocean journey had to be accomplished by the slower and less certain sailing vessel. And so it happened that the month of December had brought the year near its close before he landed at the port of destination. Thence he travelled by packet to Baltimore, where he provided quarters for his family for the winter, while he himself proceeded to Philadelphia, and, on the 9th January, 1792, appeared before the Supreme Court of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and legally qualified himself to hold and dispose of land by taking the required oath of allegiance, and becoming a citizen of the United States.

Here, with his back turned upon the old world,

and his face, bright with hopefulness, set steadfastly towards the new, let us leave him for a space to take a brief review of the previous transactions, already only hinted at, which led to his advent on the scene of his future labours.

CHAPTER II

THE GENESEE TRACT

BEFORE the War of the Revolution the colonies of North America derived their political existence from Royal charters, which gave them grants of territory of uncertain extent and indefinite boundaries, sometimes overlapping and covering the same domain. As a consequence many serious controversies, sometimes threatening to result in open hostilities, arose between the colonies about their respective rights. When the war broke out necessity demanded that these disputes should be forgotten in a federation for the attaining of a greater and more important end. But as soon as peace was declared, independence established, and measures taken for a more perfect union, the old differences broke out again and clamoured for settlement. It was insisted that the glorious result was

due to the joint efforts of the whole confederation, and that, as a consequence, the unoccupied and disputed territories should become the property of the National Government, to be disposed of for their joint benefit.

The dispute, out of which arose the later circumstances with which we are immediately concerned, lay between the States of Massachusets and New York. Massachusets claimed certain lands within the bounds of the State of New York, and, failing otherwise to arrange their differences, a Commission was mutually appointed in 1786 to endeavour to effect a compromise. The Commission met at Hartford in November of the same year, and as the result of their labours a compromise was arrived at, which required each State to make certain sacrifices and to agree to certain provisions, but through which all questions relating to the right of jurisdiction and the claim of property received their quietus.

"By the settlement thus effected, New York retained the right of government, sovereignty, and jurisdiction over all the lands in dispute, and to Massachusets was ceded the rights of soil or preemption of the soil from the sole occupants, the Seneca Indians, of 240,000 acres between the Owega

and Chenango Rivers, commonly known as the Boston ten townships; and also of all the lands in New York west of a line beginning at the eighty-second milestone on the north boundary of Pennsylvania (now the south-east corner of Steuben county), and running on a meridian line due north to Lake Ontario, excepting one mile in width on the Niagara River."

The tract of country with which Captain Williamson afterwards had to deal lay within the latter territory thus defined.

The settlement, in respect of material possessions, was greatly in favour of Massachusets; but New York made the sacrifice involved, and the dispute being ended, each State settled down to its own development.

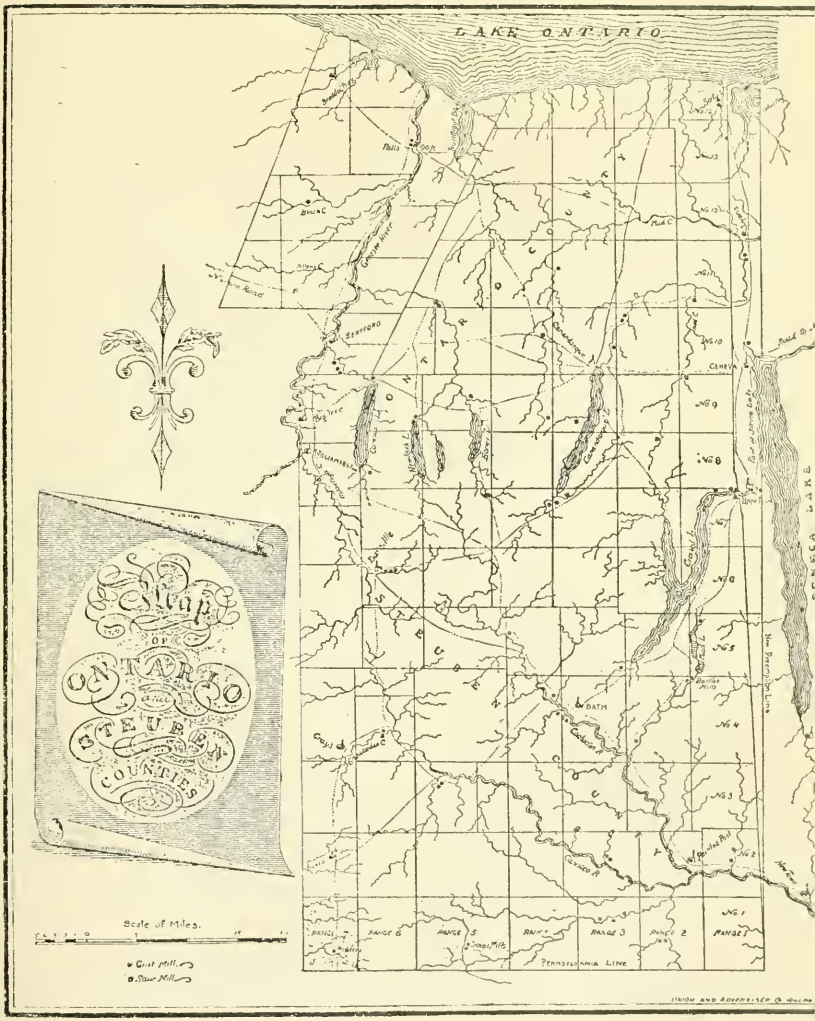
It soon became apparent that New York State, in spite of her denudation, was destined to attain the proud distinction of being the Empire State of the Union. The industrious representatives of two nations—the Dutch and the Scotch—combined by their skill and thrift to achieve this greatness for the place of their adoption. The increasing prosperity of the State, attracted people from all quarters to share it; and some of the best men of Massachusets, seeing in the sister State better opportunities and more hopeful possibilities than in their

own, migrated there. Accordingly, if Massachusets by the compromise agreement had gained largely in material possessions, on the other hand she lost more largely by the defection of the men who alone could develop the resources of these possessions. Her rights in the extensive lands were useless to her save for their intrinsic value as subjects of sale, whereby her heavy pecuniary indebtedness might be liquidated. She therefore set about disposing of those which she had gained by the settlement. First the ten townships were sold to a Boston company, and afterwards on the 1st April, 1788, she contracted to sell to Nathaniel Gorham and Oliver Phelps her rights in the second tract of country which had been assigned to her.

The sale having been effected, Gorham and Phelps at once opened negotiations with the Seneca Indians, and at a council held at Buffalo Creek a treaty was concluded on the 8th July, 1788, by which they obtained title to the eastern portion of the tract, estimated to contain over 2,200,000 acres, agreeing to pay therefor 5,000 dollars down and an annuity of 500 dollars.

This tract, running from the Pennsylvania line on the south to Lake Ontario on the north, and from the Seneca Lake on the east to the Genesee River on the

west, became known as the Genesee Tract, and included what is now Steuben county, so named after Baron von Steuben, a distinguished general in the American War of Independence. Phelps and Gorham at once caused the tract to be divided into ranges of townships six miles square, and, opening an office at Canandaigua, began the sale of their purchase. But the lands were far removed from the centres of civilisation, and the difficulty of reaching these centres was increased by the want of high-roads of communication, while the navigation of the rivers was generally difficult and at some points almost impossible. As a consequence sales were slow, and this fact, added to a rise in the value of securities in which payment was to be made, involved the proprietors in financial difficulties. They appealed for help to the great financier of the Revolution, Robert Morris, already mentioned, who responded by purchasing from them their unsold lands, except two townships which were reserved, and assuming their obligations. Morris at once caused the lands to be offered for sale in London. An English syndicate was formed, consisting of William Pulteney, William Hornby, and Patrick Colquhoun, who contracted with Morris for the purchase of the lands for the sum of £75,000; and thus the territory which had been in



THE PHELPS AND GORHAM PURCHASE.

part the cause of so much dispute between two sister States, and of embarrassment to its subsequent owners, became the possession of English capitalists, who, because they were fortunate enough to find the right man to work it for them, made it yield a rich return.

It was impossible at this time for aliens legally to hold title to land in the State of New York. Accordingly, in appointing an agent the syndicate had not only to consider his fitness to carry out the pioneering work which their enterprise necessitated, but also his commercial ability and integrity, which would justify them in reposing in him the trust of taking over the lands absolutely in his own name, and thereafter of conveying such lands as they deemed it advisable to sell. It was a great trust, but the history of the next few years shows how thoroughly Captain Williamson proved himself worthy of his patrons' confidence.

CHAPTER III

EXPLORING THE TRACT—WILLIAMSBURG—THE SITE OF BATH —ROADMAKING—TROUBLE WITH GERMAN LABOURERS— THE WILLIAMSON ROAD

AVING legally qualified himself to hold and dispose of land in the State of New York, Williamson entered into direct communication with Morris, whom he probably met at Philadelphia, for the conclusion of the contract. But before completing the negotiations, and with the view of obtaining some idea of the lands of the purchase and his subsequent task, he made a journey of examination by way of Albany and the Mohawk Valley to the Genesee country. From his own pen we have the following graphic description of the condition of the route he travelled:—"The road, as far as Whitestown, had been made passable for waggons, but from that to the Genesee was little better than an Indian path, sufficiently opened

to allow a sledge to pass, and some impassable streams bridged. At Whitestown I was obliged to change my carriage, the Albany driver getting alarmed for himself and horses when he found that for the next one hundred miles we were not only obliged to take provisions for ourselves, but for our horses, and blankets for our beds. On leaving Whitestown we found only a few straggling huts, scattered along the path, from ten to twenty miles from each other, and they affording nothing but the conveniency of and a kind of shelter from the snow." Passing through the northern portion of the territory he reached the confluence of the Canaseraga and Genesee Rivers, and there fixed upon a site on which to build a town, to be called Williamsburg in honour of two of his patrons, William Pulteney and William Hornby. His preliminary exploration convinced him of the beauty and richness of the country and satisfied him as to its value, and returning to Philadelphia he received on 11th April, 1792, in his own name from Robert Morris and his wife, in pursuance of the agreement, a deed of the lands thereafter known as the Estate of the English Association.

The purchase having been completed, he proceeded without loss of time to begin the work of opening up the country. As Eastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey were

well-populated and more contiguous to his purchase than New England, he saw the necessity of opening a more direct communication to the Genesee from those States. Accordingly, he made Northumberland, Pennsylvania, a large settlement at the junction of the north and west branches of the Susquehanna, the base of his operations, and moved his family to this frontier town. On the 3rd June, 1792, with a small party of surveyors and woodsmen he set out to explore a route to the Genesee River. He proceeded with his party up the west branch of the Susquehanna to the mouth of the Lycoming, and then entered the wilderness, taking a northerly course. In his own narrative he says: "Sensible of the advantages this new country would reap from a communication with Pennsylvania, my first object was to trace out the possibility of opening a communication across the Allegany Mountains. Discouraged by every person I inquired of for information relative to the route, I determined to explore the country myself. After a laborious exertion of ten days I came to the Cowanesque Creek, when I first perceived that I was in the county of Ontario. The route, though very mountainous, was not impracticable for a waggon road. Proceeding thence towards the north-north-west, after six days more travelling I and my party

pitched our tents on an Indian clearing at the junction of the Caneseraga and Genesee Rivers, near where Williamsburg had been located." By this route he was satisfied that a good highway was practicable, the distance being less than one hundred and seventy miles, and shorter by one hundred from the west branch of the Susquehanna; and so he resolved at once to open a waggon road through the wilderness.

The exploration of this route led also to a change in his plans. He discovered that the south-east portion of the tract was rough and hilly, much of it timbered with pitch-pine and scrub-oaks, and by no means to be compared with the rich bottoms of the Genesee on the smooth slopes surrounding the Lakes. It was at once apparent to him that if he put upon the market the best lands first, the poor and broken lands would remain on his hands for a long time. He also saw that the forbidding part of the country had some advantages; it was nearer the southern settlements, more healthful, and abounded in purer streams; so he resolved to make his headquarters and chief settlement in their midst, saying, "As Nature has done so much for the northern plains, I will do something for the southern mountains."

As he proceeded through the valley of the Conhocton, he was struck with the beauty of the intersection made by a broad valley extending north to Lake Keuka; the Seneca Indians had given it the name of Dona-ta-gwenda (an opening within an opening). As it was near the centre of the southern part of the tract, and at the head of navigation on the Conhocton River, with its abundant water-power, he determined to locate there his chief town, and the headquarters for the sale of his lands. The site bore a striking resemblance to that beautiful valley in England where the Avon winds gracefully around the base of a hill and encircles a charming plateau upon which has stood for centuries the ancient city of Bath, in the English county of Somerset. This resemblance, together with the fact that about the same time the only daughter of Williamson's patron, William Pulteney, was created Baroness Bath, suggested the name which from its foundation has been applied to the settlement which was there planted in the forest—the town of Bath.

The first work of the pioneer was the construction of a highway through the wilderness in the line of his survey. For help in the work of opening up that part of the road which lay within the State of Pennsylvania,

Captain Williamson applied to the Governor of the State. It was a moderate and reasonable request, and one which it might have been expected would at once have been granted in consideration of the connection which would thus be effected between the State and the latent resources of the new country. But the application was refused, and it would seem that there was even some difficulty in getting the consent of the State to build the road without her assistance, for Williamson has been considered fortunate in obtaining this permission. Thus thrown upon his own resources, the intrepid pioneer, far from being discouraged, was stimulated to increased energy and endeavour. If Pennsylvania would not help him he must do the work himself, and he was not the man to shrink from the entire task. Collecting a number of stout Pennsylvania woodsmen, the arduous labour of constructing the road which should join the Genesee country to the civilisation of the south at once began. This band was under the charge of two overseers, Hammond and Brown, and its work went steadily on. In addition there were at first no fewer than one hundred and twenty Germans employed in the same labour, but the Germans proved a source of trouble and annoyance. Their presence on the field

of operations was due to an action of Patrick Colquhoun who, without consulting Williamson, had arranged with one Berezy to collect a colony of steady German farmers to be settled in the Genesee country, whither they were to be carried free, and where they were to be supplied with twenty-five acre farms at reduced rates. But when the greater number of them arrived in Philadelphia, instead of New York, where it was agreed to land them, they proved to be a motley crowd of loafers and malcontents which poverty, laziness, and necessity had gathered together in Hamburg. They were entirely unsuited for the purpose of the agreement, and Robert Morris concluded that the only way out of the difficulty was to use them in cutting the road to the future settlement.

In spite of every difficulty and hindrance the road-making made rapid progress. Early in November, 1792, thirty miles of it, sufficiently wide for waggons, had been opened, and by the end of the year the working party had completed it to Dansville, Livingston County.

While the workmen laboured, Williamson was busy superintending the progress of the work, and exploring other parts of the Genesee tract. In January, 1793,

he went to Philadelphia and to New York, where he remained until February 6th. But on that date a hurried courier from the busy scenes in the midst of the wilderness brought him word that the trouble with the Germans, which had begun with their coming, had reached a crisis. From the first they had been lazy and shiftless, ungrateful for the means of livelihood that had been placed to their hand, concerned only for their own eating and drinking, yet unwilling to work for the same. They fiddled and danced and drank whisky; and even a clergyman who had come with them proved a bad specimen of his cloth. It transpired that Berezy had not only deceived Colquhoun, but had also deceived his emigrants. To swell his numbers, and gratify his ambition to be the head of a colony, he had held out to them the most attractive promises; had assured them that, his patrons being rich, they should want for nothing, and that, as they were to be the founders of a city, they could each choose such employment as was best suited to their tastes and habits. That they were to dig and delve in the dirty earth was not in the bond according to their understanding. When they discovered by experience the real state of affairs and the actual work which they were expected to perform,

universal discontent speedily followed and mutterings of rebellion were soon heard. Berezy in many ways nursed the mutinous spirit. By indulgence and other artful devices he obtained complete control of the colonists, and finally set himself above Captain Williamson, claiming to have brought his authority directly from headquarters in London. A store had been established at Williamsburg under the care of John Johnstone, and Berezy and the Germans used its goods and provisions lavishly; and, in addition, Berezy contracted debts for supplies, assuming that he was acting for the Association and not under the authority of Williamson.

The discontent and disaffection of the German emigrants had at last broken out into open mutiny which, apart from the safety of those who were unfortunately associated with them, threatened the success of the operations. Williamson returned in haste to Northumberland, and thence, accompanied by his friend Thomas Morris, went on to the scene of operations to confer with Berezy, who had been the means of importing and encouraging the mutinous crew. He had a house at Williamsburg, then occupied by James Miller, where he kept a desk containing all his papers that had reference to that locality; and there he and his friend took up

their quarters. Sending for Berezy he had an interview with him, which ended by his displacing him as an agent and forbidding him to exercise any authority over the Germans. Then, calling the Germans together, he informed them of their new relations, and proposed measures of further assistance to them, conditional upon their going to work and trying to help themselves. At first they were disposed to listen to his proposals, but the superior influence of Berezy prevailed, and further mutiny and riot succeeded. On the Sunday afterwards, Williamson says, "Berezy and the minister were all day pow-wowing in every house in the settlement." Monday came, and Williamson found his quarters besieged. The Germans had collected in a body, and, under the influence of Berezy, were making extravagant demands as to the terms of peace and their continuance in the colony. Captain Williamson retreated into the house with his friends, Morris and Johnstone and several others—in all a force vastly inferior to the refractory colonists. "Driven into a corner between two writing-desks," says Williamson, "I had luckily, some of my own people near me who were able to keep the most savage and daring of the Germans off, though the cry was to lay hold of me. Nothing

could equal my situation but some of the Parisian scenes, and I was for an hour and a half in this situation, every instant expecting to be torn in pieces."

Berezy, finding that the storm he had raised had become too violent, quelled it; but rapine took the place of personal assault. The cattle on the premises were driven off, or killed to furnish a feast for a general carousal. The mutiny and plundering lasted for several days, there being no authority or superior force to quell it. At one time the physician of the colony who, though a German, had taken sides with Captain Williamson, became the object of the fiercest resentment. He was seized, and in attempting to rescue him Morris and Johnstone were assaulted and their lives placed in jeopardy, though finally they made their escape. Present in all the affray was Richard Cuyler, then acting as Captain Williamson's clerk. He was despatched to Albany with a requisition to Governor George Clinton for a force sufficient to quell the riot and apprehend the rioters. Berezy, with a few of the Germans, departed for Philadelphia, for the double purpose of escaping arrest and enlisting Robert Morris on their side. Governor Clinton issued an order to Judah Colt, who

had been appointed sheriff of the new county of Ontario, commanding him to summon a posse for the arrest of the rioters. A posse equal in numbers with the German colonists was no easy matter to secure at that early period of settlement; but, fortunately, some boats' crews and new settlers had just arrived at Bath. They made a forced march through the woods and, joined by others, succeeded in arresting those who had been foremost in the riot. They were taken to Canandaigua, and light fines imposed, the principal object being the assertion of the supremacy of the laws. Unable to pay the fines they were hired out to new settlers in Canandaigua and the vicinity to earn the money. Berezy going from Philadelphia to New York put the Germans and himself under the auspices of a German benevolent association, who had made arrangements with Governor Simcoe for settling emigrants in the township of Markham at what is now Toronto.

Thus ended the trouble with the German emigrants. Their unfortunate importation resulted in a dead loss; for when, in a letter of date November 2, 1793, Williamson washed his hands of the whole business, he stated that he had expended some £8,000 on them since they landed, for which there was little to show

in return. The trial of the rioters cost more money, and, being followed by certain processes of litigation, the costs largely increased the amount of unproductive expenditure.

Amid all the worry and trouble involved by this irritating experience, progress in the work of road-making was being constantly reported, and in August, 1793, it was completed to Williamsburg. It was a triumph of skill and energy, patience and perseverance, endurance and courage; and no one can justly withhold the meed of praise from him who, with his stout band of pioneers, independent of State aid, without an inhabitant to furnish encouragement and labour, devoid of many of the materials of construction, and often without sure supplies of food, cast up a highway in the wilderness, by means of which the wilderness itself was transformed into well-ordered and prosperous abodes of civilisation. It has ever since been known as the Williamson Road, and was subsequently adopted as the post route.

This road was but the first of many others which proved the most successful means of opening and starting the settlements. Captain Williamson was quick to see the value of the construction of roads. He said that fifty families settled on the State Road in the space of

four months after it was opened, and he and his company constructed many roads, thus opening the lands for sale to the early settlers as a matter of public policy.

The great road having been finished as far as was necessary for the point selected for the new town, Captain Williamson, as soon as navigation was opened in March, 1793, organised a party of thirty woodsmen, surveyors, and settlers to proceed at once to the site previously selected by him, in order to clear the ground and lay the foundations of his new town and settlement. The party was placed in charge of his faithful assistant, Charles Cameron, who had accompanied him from Scotland. They set out in two Durham boats laden with tools, provisions, and other necessaries, and made their way up the north branch of the Susquehanna to Tioga Point. The boats carried from five to eight tons, and were poled up the stream, or where there was a strong current or rift, were cordelled or warped up by the passengers and crew by means of long ropes. From the Point the navigation was more difficult. It was found impossible to manage both boats, and accordingly Cameron left one of them at the Point, with much of the freight, in charge of a few men, and proceeded

with the other up the Chemung and Conhocton. With much difficulty, and after overcoming many obstructions caused by rocks and fallen trees, they at last, on April 15, made a safe landing on the banks of the Conhocton at the chosen site, near the present location of the Delaware and Lackawanna depôt, and a little more than thirty rods from what is now known as Pulteney Square in Bath.

And there their hazardous journey ended. There lay the scene of the heavy toil which should first clear the forest of its giant trees and tangled underwood, and then build a city which should furnish homes and happiness for themselves and those who have now entered into their labours.

CHAPTER IV

CLEARING THE GROUND—DANGERS AND HARDSHIPS—DEATH OF CHRISTINA WILLIAMSON—ARRIVAL OF SETTLERS—FORMATION OF THE TOWN

ITH a stern task before them, involving the most arduous toils and many privations, the pioneers bravely settled to their work. Two days after Cameron and his party had reached the site of Bath, Captain Williamson arrived. Finding it necessary, however, to visit other portions of the tract, he went on to Canandaigua and Williamsburg, but, after a brief absence, returned to give his personal attention to the foundation of his forest city. To Cameron and his party was given the work of clearing the ground and making rustic cabins in which to shelter themselves, and afterwards of erecting a log building on what is now the south side of Pulteney Square, of sufficient capacity for the accommodation of Captain Williamson's family

and the transaction of his official business. To Thomas Rees, jr., the surveyor, and his staff of assistants, was assigned the task of planning the town, locating the streets and squares, and numbering the lots; and thus divided, the labour was performed with marvellous celerity.

The once solitary place was now the scene of busy life. The workers worked with a willing cheerfulness. The giant pines fell beneath their resounding strokes, and the forest became a plain. The ox-teams carried the timber to the builders, in the place of trees log-houses were erected, and the hand of the indefatigable toiler transformed the wilderness into the abode of civilisation. Amid the throng of his busy workmen the inspiring presence of Charles Williamson was always prominent. All the operations received his personal superintendence, and at his word of cheer and encouragement the weary forgot their weariness, the willing worker became more willing, and the faint-hearted plucked up courage to face the hardships and dangers with which the work was attended.

And, in truth, they needed all the encouragement which even Williamson could give. The dangers that threatened them came not only from the hazardous nature

of the task in which they were engaged, but also from the possibility of attacks upon them by the Indians, who had made the unbroken forest lands their hunting-ground, and who, when the clearing of the trees began, must have felt that their preserves were being rudely invaded. That the natural anxiety on this account was removed, and that no attack was made, was entirely due to the consummate tact and courtesy of Captain Williamson. It was his first care to cultivate a friendly feeling and relationship with the North American Indians. He strove to show that he and his band had come, not as enemies, but as friends, and he succeeded in inspiring the Indians with confidence in him by his trust in them. An interesting little incident in illustration of this, though it belongs to a slightly later date, may here be mentioned. When his little daughter was born, the Indians heard of it, and reported the event to their squaws. The Indian women, eager to see a white baby, persuaded a chief and some of his followers to go to Williamson's house and ask if they might take the baby to one of their wigwams, which was pitched at no great distance from the settlement. It was a hard thing to ask, and one which tried to the utmost the faith of Williamson in his dusky friends. But he resolved to make the risk in

order to prove his confidence, and, the consent of the mother having been obtained, the baby, well wrapped up, was entrusted to the chief. The confidence was not misplaced, for a few hours later the child, who must have created an excited interest in the native camp, was brought safely back and restored to the arms of her mother.

Acts of faith and friendship like this must have gone far to cement the relationship which Williamson desired to effect. But this relationship could not be attained at once, and it is little wonder if, in addition to the other dangers and hardships which they were daily called upon to face, the pioneers at first toiled on with much apprehension from the Indians, which kept them continually on their guard.

The hardships and privations arising from their physical conditions were such as were trying to the most dauntless spirits. They were far removed from the haunts of civilisation, and the sense of their isolation must have weighed upon them with depressing effect. The labour of clearing away the forest and subduing the soil was heavy, and taxed their energies to the utmost. Every day fresh obstacles, unknown and hardly understood by those who have not experienced them,

demanded their best skill and most steadfast courage in the task of overcoming. In addition, their food supplies were short, and it was difficult to add to them. There was indeed an abundance of game in the forest, and of fish in the river, but the workmen were too busy to take them. Whisky was plentiful; but their fare, which consisted chiefly of pork, flour, and corn-meal, was coarse in quality and deficient in quantity. The meagreness of the necessaries of life told upon them heavily. Charles Cameron, in 1848, in referring to the expedition, said: "We suffered from hunger and sickness a great deal. I am now the only survivor of those merry Scotch and Irish boys who used to be so happy together." Turner, in his history of the Phelps and Gorham purchase, states: "These pioneers had a distinct view of the elephant. Provisions failed, and they were at one time three days without food; as they cleared away the forest, the fever and ague, as it was wont to do, walked into the opening, and the new-comers were soon freezing, shaking, and then burning with fever in their hastily-constructed cabins." Williamson was far from being exempt from these sufferings. He bore his share of them with hardihood, and his example stimulated the others. Turner, quoting an unknown

authority, says: "He would lie in his hut with his feet to the fire, and, when the cold chills of ague came on, call for someone to lie close to his back to keep him warm." Yet though suffering acutely his first thought was never for himself, but always for others; and, as has been said, his bright, cheering presence passed from man to man, and imparted the needful inspiration in those hard times.

But if those trials and hardships were at first depressing and discouraging, when met in the brave spirit which Williamson inculcated by word and act, they reacted with moral compensation on the character of the pioneers. Adversity, when rightly regarded, received, and used, ever becomes an instrument for good in the lives of men. And in the case of these men their dangers tended to produce an alert and resourceful character. The hardships and obstacles that had to be met and conquered inspired self-confidence, and made them—through stern discipline—braver, hardier, and more enterprising. And those hardships and dangers being common to all, there sprang up among them a strong feeling of sympathy and brotherhood which knit them together in a mutual helpfulness, which had not been attained so largely in any other way

Thus disciplined and cheered, the pioneers made rapid progress with their work. The huts of the workmen, and Williamson's house and office, were first erected. Then on the north side of what is now Morris Street a log structure was built as an hotel for John Metcalf, where after the labours of the day the workers gathered to recount their experiences, and spend the evening in brotherly fellowship. On the Conhocton River a site was secured by James Henderson, the mill-wright, who, with his staff of workmen, began at once to build a saw-mill to furnish boards for floors, doors, and roofs, for the structures that were to be put up. It was the first saw-mill in the town, and was completed on the 25th August.

In addition to the dangers and hardships that were peculiar to all, Williamson had to overcome an antagonism directed against himself. He was a foreigner, and had held a commission in the British Army, with whom a large portion of American settlers had just been contending on hard-fought battlefields. Arms had, indeed, been grounded, but feelings of resentment and prejudice were rife. The possession of Fort Niagara and Oswego, the British claims on the territory of Western New York, and their tampering with the Western Indians,

served to keep alive those feelings. Although Captain Williamson had, from the time he landed in America, given the strongest evidence that he intended to merge himself with the disenthralled colonies and to throw off all allegiance to Great Britain, still he encountered jealousy and distrust. In recapitulating to Sir William Pulteney, toward the close of the agency, the difficulties he had encountered, he makes the following remarks: "Even previous to 1794 there was a strong predisposition against everything that was British. This was more particularly the case in those parts of the back country adjacent to the British settlements, and where, from the influence of the British Government with the Indians, there was too much reason to fear that hostilities would be directed against their infant settlements. Their jealousies met me in a hundred mortifying instances, and they were with difficulty prevented from having the most disagreeable effects both to me and every old countryman in the settlements. To such an extent was this carried that every road I talked of was said to be for the purpose of admitting the Indians and British; every set of arms I procured—though really to enable the settlers to defend themselves against the Indians —was said to be for supplying the expected enemy;

and the very grass seed I bought, for the purpose of supplying the farmers, was seized as gunpowder going to the enemies of the country." He also alleges that these distrusts and opposition to his movements were enhanced by influential individuals who were interested in the sale of wild lands in other localities. All this, however, gradually wore off, and he won the favour of those who had at first distrusted him.

About the 10th July, Captain Williamson's wife and two children arrived in Bath from Northumberland, and were duly installed in the home that had been prepared for them. The arrival of his family was an important event in the history of the settlement. He caused them to come in order that others should see that they also might bring their families there before the stumps were finally cleared away, and while the rattlesnakes still abounded ; and Mrs. Williamson deserves praise for thus helping her husband in his enterprise by his characteristic method of example. The example was followed, for in his own narrative the captain states that before the winter set in no fewer than fifteen families had settled in the town. Besides his own, the only families that are now known to have been living there at that time were those of Metcalf,

Doyle, Dunn, Corbett, Turner, Aulls, Paul, and a German family named Gottlieb.

Previous to this, Williamson had advised Patrick Colquhoun, who had the management of the affairs of the syndicate, of the name and location of the town; and in a letter, dated June 15, 1793, Colquhoun expressed his approval. "I am glad," he wrote, "you are so much pleased with your new town of Bath. I hope it may prove a healthy spot, for on this much depends. It is certainly a position infinitely more convenient than Williamsburg, and on this account I am glad you mean to fix your residence there."

On the 27th September the shadow of death darkened the home of the Williamsons; for on that date their eldest daughter, Christina, died at the early age of eight years, and the little domestic circle was broken. It was a pathetic coincidence that the man who first brought his family to establish the city of the living, should also be called upon to found there, through this painful bereavement, the city of the dead. "Not one of the great pines was cut," we are told, "in the plot which was thus early selected for a burial place, and we may see the little company of perhaps a dozen persons carrying a little coffin into the forest, and

without a clergyman to lead the service, amid their tears depositing the remains of the loved child in the first grave opened for a white person in the new town." The cemetery thus opened contemporaneously with the founding of Bath is situated in Steuben Street, and a well-preserved stone marks that little grave now a century old.

On the first day of January, 1794, Henry M'Elwee, a young Scoto-Irishman, arrived at Bath, and his account of his coming, and the condition in which he found the settlement is interesting. "I only found," he says, "a few shanties in the woods. Williamson had his house near the site of the present land office, and the Metcalfs kept a log tavern upon Morris Street, nearly opposite the Mansion House. I went to the tavern, and asked for supper and lodging; they said they could give me neither, for their house was full. I could get nothing to eat. An old Dutchman was sitting there who offered me food and lodging, and we went up through the woods to where St. Patrick Square now is. There the Dutchman had a little log-house; there was no floor to it. I made a supper of mush and milk, and laid down by the fire and slept soundly." M'Elwee was enlisted in the work of the settlement, and in the

spring of the year, under the direction of Williamson, he made the first substantial clearings, consisting of the site of Pulteney Square, and four acres behind the agent's house for a garden, for the cultivation of which Captain Williamson imported a gardener from England. The trees on the square were carefully chopped close to the ground. A single pine was left standing in front of the agency-house for a "Liberty Tree." It was trimmed so as to leave a tuft on the top, and it bade defiance to the elements until after 1820, when it was blown down.

In the spring of 1794, George M'Clure, another Scoto-Irishman, in company with his uncle, John Moore, from Northumberland, after various adventures, reached the new town. "We put up," he says, "at the only house of entertainment in the village — if it could be called a house. Its construction was of pitch-pine logs, in two apartments, one storey high, kept by a kind and obliging family of the name of Metcalf. This house was the only one in town, except a similar one for the temporary abode of Captain Williamson, which answered the purpose of parlour, dining-room, and land office. There were besides some shanties for mechanics and labourers. I called on Captain Williamson, and intro-

duced myself as a mechanic. I told him that I had seen his advertisement, and in pursuance of his invitation had come to ask employment. 'Very well,' said he, 'young man, you shall not be disappointed.' He told me I should have the whole of his work if I could procure as many hands as were necessary. We entered into an agreement. He asked me when I should be ready to commence business. I replied, as soon as I could return to Northumberland, engage some hands, and send my tools and baggage up the north branch to Tioga Point, that being then the head of boat navigation." As agreed, M'Clure went back, shipped his baggage and tools, and forthwith returned to Bath on foot, procured his effects at Tioga Point, boated them up, and commenced with a will to build up the town.

Those men were but samples of a large number of settlers who, in 1794, found their way to Bath and helped to make it. Williamson welcomed them, and apportioned their lots. The town began to assume an ordered shape, and streets and squares made the wilderness a thing of the past. Out of compliment to his friends and patrons, the captain named the principal street running east and west, Morris ; the public square, Pulteney ; the broad street parallel to it, with a similar

square, St. Patrick; the street between them, Steuben; and that connecting them, Liberty — names which they have ever since borne, except St. Patrick, which a few years ago was changed to Washington.

The idea from the first was to provide for the growth of an important city; and although afterwards the failure of the Conhocton's water supply, the building of the Erie Canal, and the invention of the steam locomotive, seriously interfered to destroy commercial relations with Baltimore, and the dream of Williamson has never been fully realised, yet the town has developed to an extent which justifies the pride of its inhabitants, and the associations that cluster around its beginning and continued progress are such as may be remembered with gratitude and interest.

CHAPTER V

WILLIAMSON APPOINTED JUDGE OF THE COUNTY OF ONTARIO —EARLY POSTAL SYSTEM—GENEVA—THE SETTLEMENT AT SODUS, AND CONFLICT WITH THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES—FINAL SUBMISSION AND PACIFICATION OF THE INDIANS—WILLIAMSON'S HOSPITALITY

ARLY in the history of the settlement, Williamson entertained political aspirations which prompted him to seek election as a member of the Legislative Counsel of New York. But these aspirations were for the time set aside in deference to the advice of Robert Morris. "My own opinion is," wrote Morris to Williamson in April, 1793, "that you and Tom (the son of Morris) might be better employed than you would be in going as members of the Assembly. He is too young, and you ought always to be at the receipt of customs in Ontario County for the sale of lands. . . . I think

you can't be judge and representative." In the next year, however, Thomas Morris represented Ontario County in the Legislature, and Captain Williamson was appointed a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas and General Sessions of the same county.

As yet there were no towns with prescribed boundaries in the county. The Act of the Legislature erecting the county of Ontario provided that the Justices of the Sessions should proceed to divide the new county into two or more districts for town purposes. They had, in 1791, made the "District of the Painted Post," which embraced the entire territory of the present county of Steuben.

All the settlers at that time were located on the Chemung, Tioga, and Canisteo Rivers. In 1793, Jedediah Stephens, of Canisteo, was elected Supervisor of the district. At the January session, 1794, through the influence of Captain Williamson, a new district was made, embracing all the territory west of the second range, under the name of Williamson. This appears by the adjustment of certain accounts between the district of Erwin, or Painted Post, and the district of Williamson, made by Eli Mead and Eleazer Lindsley, of the first part, and by Jedediah Stephens and George Harnell, of the

other, on April, 1794, recorded in the minutes of the district of Painted Post. There is no record of this division to be found in the Clerk's office of Ontario County. Bath was included in the new district; but when and where its town meetings were held is not now known.

Up to this time there were few post-roads or post-offices in the country. The nearest place for deposit of letters on the south was at Northumberland, one hundred and forty miles distant. To meet the want, Captain Williamson employed his own post-riders to journey to and from that place, and they made the trip once a fortnight. Thomas Corbett rode to the Block House and exchanged packages with Alexander Smith, of Lycoming, who filled the route from that place to Northumberland. Charles Cameron was the local distributor of letters at Bath until his removal to Sodus, when William Kersey performed the duties until the Government office was established on January 1, 1801, with Dugald Cameron as postmaster.

In the spring of 1794 Williamson began to develop a settlement at what became known as Geneva. The settlement was established at a point which made it the door or gateway to the Genesee country; it was neces-

sary, therefore, to make it as attractive as possible. The principal building erected was the Geneva Hotel. It was completed in December, and opened with a grand ball. The hotel was talked of far and wide as a wonderful enterprise, and its reputation ran high. Even after a lapse of fifty years, when fine hotels had arisen in all the principal towns and villages of the Genesee Tract, it was said of the old Williamson Hotel, as it was called, that in its fine location, with its large open park in front, it was ranked as one of the first class. How great, then, must have been its comparative magnificence when it had no competitors in all the region west of Utica, save perhaps three or four moderate-sized framed taverns, and when log taverns were generally the order of the day. In proposing the erection of such a house to his principals, Williamson urged that, as it would stand at the doorway or entrance to the Genesee country, it should be respectable, and so designed as to make a favourable impression; and that such a house, where all the comforts of a good English inn could be realised, would invite respectable people to the country. As the landlord of the new hotel Williamson appointed Thomas Powell, whom he had known in London in connection with the celebrated

"Thatched Cottage, the resort of statesmen, politicians, and wits." Mr. Powell became at an early stage proprietor. After keeping the hotel for many years, he removed to Schenectady, and was succeeded by his brother William Powell.

Although Captain Williamson's house was at Bath, a large proportion of his time was spent at Geneva attending to matters connected with the Northern division of the purchase. The company that he drew around him made a very considerable business for the new hotel, and it was the early home of the young men without families located at Geneva, and the principal stopping-place for emigrants, who could afford the comforts of a good inn. Under the auspices of Reed and Ryckmann, Joseph Annin, and Benjamin Barton, a small village plot had been surveyed; but this was superseded under Captain Williamson's instructions by a new, enlarged survey generally as now indicated, except that Williamson's plan contemplated the building up of the whole town fronting the Lake, and the making of the space between the main street and the Lake into terraced parks and gardens. Geneva is now, though beautiful in all its appointments, more upon the utilitarian order than Captain Williamson intended. He had seen

the original in his travels on the Continent, and, associating Seneca Lake with Lake Leman, had in view an imitation in a wilderness of the new world. In reference to this as well as other of his projections, his ardent and sanguine temperament led him to suppose that villages and village improvements could to a considerable extent precede a general cultivation of the soil. Experience has shown that they must follow by slow steps after it.

Early in 1794 Williamson also began a settlement at Sodus, on the shore of Lake Ontario. He also had roads cut from Palmyra and Phelpstown to get access to the spot from those points. It was his first appearance in the Lake Ontario region, and his presence there, with his surveyors, roadmakers, builders, and all the retinue necessary to carry out his plans, created a new era in the district, and inspired new hopes in the scattered backwood settlers. It had looked, before he came, as if for long years no one would be bold enough to penetrate the dark, heavy forests that in a wide belt were stretched along the shores of the Lake. No hopes had been entertained of realising for years any better facilities for transportation to market than were afforded by Ganargua Creek, the outlet of Canandaigua Lake and Clyde River. But Williamson changed all this.

He preceded his enterprise by a written announcement of the plan of operations. According to the plan, he contemplated the survey of a "town between Salmon Creek and Great Sodus Bay, and a spacious street with a large square in the centre, between the Falls on Salmon Creek and the anchorage in the Bay, and the building of mills at the Falls on Salmon Creek." He adds :—"As the harbour of Great Sodus is acknowledged to be the finest on Lake Ontario, this town, in the convenience of the mills and extensive fisheries, will command advantages unknown to the country, independent of the navigation of the Great Lake and the St. Lawrence." The town was surveyed by Joseph Colt according to the plan. The in-lots contained a quarter of an acre and the out-lots ten acres. The whole was upon a scale of magnificence, ill-suited to that primitive period, and yet perhaps justified by the splendid prospects, and more than all, by the capacious and beautiful bay—the best natural harbour upon the whole chain of lakes—a view of which even now excites surprise that it has not long since realised all the sanguine expectations of Captain Williamson.

The in-lots in the new town were offered for one hundred dollars, and the out-lots for four dollars per

acre; the farm-lands in all the neighbourhood were disposed of at one dollar fifty cents per acre. Mills were erected at the Falls on Salmon Creek, a pleasure boat was placed on the Bay, and several other improvements were made. On roads, surveys, buildings, etc., over $20,000 were expended in the first two years.

The first difficulty encountered in the work of establishing the settlement was the fever and ague—that early incubus that brooded over all the pioneering enterprises. When the sick season came, agents, mechanics and labourers could work only on "well days," and Captain Williamson soon began to realise that there was something besides the romantic and the beautiful about the "Bay of Naples" he had found hid away in the forests of the Genesee country.

Another and still more serious difficulty was encountered in the action of the British authorities in Canada, who made the settlement at Sodus the occasion of a controversy which at first threatened the outbreak of another war. The representatives of the British Government in Canada had not entirely lost hope of renewing the Revolutionary struggle, and invading New York. They held their posts at Niagara and Oswego, together with many other forts which the treaty of peace

required them to surrender. They regarded with strong disfavour the presence and work of Williamson and his band of pioneers; and when the new settlement at Sodus was established, they determined that a check must be put to the movement. Accordingly, by the order of Colonel Simcoe, the Canadian Governor, Lieutenant Sheaffe, commanding at Fort Oswego, was despatched to Sodus on 16th August, 1794, and, in the absence of Williamson, left a protest against the prosecution of the new settlement, and appointed a meeting to take place ten days later. At the time the protest was lodged Williamson was busy with the superintendence of the forest clearing and the erection of new buildings, and his time and energy were fully employed by the constant demands made upon him by the increasing progress of the settlement work. But he resolved to keep the appointment, impervious to the fear of intimidation; and a fine example of dauntless courage and unswerving determination he presented as, with a brace of loaded pistols on his table, he received Lieutenant Sheaffe in the log cabin, when that officer arrived with great military display. The meeting between Captain Williamson and Lieutenant Sheaffe, however, was friendly enough. They had known each other before,

and while in the same service had marched through some parts of England together. The lieutenant handed to Captain Williamson the protest.

"I am commissioned by Governor Simcoe," said he, "to deliver this protest, and require an answer."

"I am a citizen of the United States," replied Williamson, "and under their authority and protection I possess these lands. I know no right that His Britannic Majesty, or Governor Simcoe, has to interfere or molest me. The only allegiance I owe to any power on earth is to the United States; and so far from being intimidated by threats from people I have no connection with, I shall proceed with my improvements; and nothing but superior force shall make me abandon the place. Is the protest of Governor Simcoe intended to apply to Sodus exclusively?"

"By no means," replied Sheaffe. "It is intended to embrace all the Indian lands purchased since the peace of 1783."

"And what," inquired Williamson, "are Governor Simcoe's intentions, supposing that the protest is disregarded?"

"I am merely the official bearer of the papers," said Sheaffe; "but I have a further message to deliver from Governor Simcoe, which is, that he reprobates

your conduct exceedingly for endeavouring to obtain flour from Upper Canada, and, should he permit it, it would be acknowledging the right of the United States to these Indian lands."

The gauntlet having been thus thrown down, matters looked serious. Williamson immediately dispatched messages to General Knox, the secretary for war, and to Governor Chirton at Washington informing them that the sovereignty of New York was denied.

In these letters he detailed all that had transpired, suggested some measures for protection, and gave assurances that the mandate of Governor Simcoe would be disregarded. In the letter to General Knox he says: "It is pretty well ascertained that for some time past quantities of military stores and ammunition have been forwarded to Oswego. This makes me think it not improbable that Lieutenant Sheaffe will attempt a forcible possession of Sodus on his return. I shall, however, without relaxing, go on with my business there until driven off by a superior force. It is needless for me to trouble you with any comments on this unparalleled piece of insolence and gross insult to the Government of the United States." At the same time he sent a letter detailing the insolence of Simcoe to William Pulteney to be

shown to William Pitt, the British Prime Minister. In this letter he said: "I shall make no further comment on this business than to observe that, anything short of actual hostilities, it completes the unequalled insolent conduct of Mr. Simcoe towards this Government. Mr. Simcoe's personal attack on myself and you I treat with the scorn it deserves, but I beg leave to give you a sketch of his political conduct. On his first arrival in this country, by deep-laid schemes he has prevented every possibility of an accommodation between this country and the hostile Indians; and this summer by his intrigues he has drawn several tribes of friendly Indians from the territory of the United States to the British side of the lines, and left nothing undone to induce the Six Nations, our neighbours, to take up the hatchet the moment he gives the word. You must be acquainted with his marching a body of armed troops to, and erecting a fort at the Rapids of the Miami, seventy miles within the territory of the United States; but this being an extensive wilderness, his action seemed of less importance. Not content with this, he has now interfered with our settlements in a manner so unlike the dignity of a great nation that it must astonish you. If it is the intention of the British ministry, by low and

underhand schemes, to keep alive a harassing war against helpless women and children, or by murders on this frontier to add to the list of murders already committed through the influence of their servants here, and to treat this government with the most unwarrantable insolence and contempt, I allow Mr. Simcoe is the most industrious and faithful servant the British Government ever had. But if it is their intention to cultivate a friendly intercourse with this country, it never can take place while such is the conduct of their Governor here. For my own part, I think it would be doing the Government of Great Britain a most essential service, should their intentions towards this country be friendly, to show to their Ministry the conduct of Governor Simcoe; and I write this letter that you may show it to Mr. Dundas or Mr. Pitt, if you think proper. Their knowledge of me, I am convinced, will give it sufficient weight. If these transactions are in consequence of orders from Great Britain, and if their views are hostile, there is nothing further to be said."

Meantime, Governor Chirton, stirred to the hottest resentment by the unwarrantable interference that had been displayed, issued orders to Colonel Ganesvoort to prepare immediately for the defence of the new settle-

ments. The colonel commissioned Captain Williamson to build a suitable block-house in Bath, as well as at Sodus, for protection. Williamson promptly proceeded to execute the order, and called for proposals to prepare the timber and prosecute the work. His call was responded to with enthusiasm. The whole district was aroused; and the young mechanic, George M'Clure, eager for the fray, dropped the implements of peace, girded on a rusty sword, recruited a company, and commenced drilling them at once.

War seemed inevitable, and the Government of the United States took the matter in hand.[1] But the letter of Williamson to Pulteney, which had been laid before Pitt, must have been productive of good. Diplomatic negotiations were opened; the British relinquished their arrogant demands, afforded adequate apologies, and the threatened storm blew over. The old swords were turned into plough-shares; the timber for the block-house was used for better purposes; and the stockades for Pulteney Square made capital fence-posts. Thus through the invincible courage of Williamson, his prompt statesmanship, and the influence of his friendship with William Pitt, a danger which threatened the very

[1] See Letters in the Appendix.

existence of the settlements he had striven so hard to establish was happily averted.

The interference of the British-Canadian authorities, though prompted by the desire for the aggrandisement of their own empire, was made ostensibly in defence of the interests of the Indians whose once unmolested hunting-grounds had been invaded, and were being rapidly abolished by the intrusion of the settlers. In spite of the tact and courtesy of Williamson, it was but natural that the Indians should resent the sweeping changes of the white man in the place where they had once held undisputed sway. Danger to the work of settlement was always to be anticipated from this source, and every means was taken to avert it. In July, 1794, Williamson was at Whitestown in attendance before the Commissioners, who were endeavouring to conclude a treaty with the Indians; but it was not until Wayne's great victory over the Western Indians in August that safety was secured by the absolute submission of the whole race. Later in the year Colonel Pickering held a treaty with the Six Nations at Canandaigua, settled all differences with them, and buried the hatchet for ever. William Savary, a Quaker minister from Philadelphia, selected by the Indians to look after their

interests, attended the conference. In going and returning he passed over the Williamson road as far as Blood's Corner. He reports in his journal that there was not a settler between Atlanta and Bath, and that Corbett's tavern at Mud Creek was the only house between Bath and Painted Post; and he relates that Captain Williamson entertained him right royally at his mansion for a night on his way home, but makes no mention of the growth or size of the town.

Peace having been secured where war was threatened, and all apprehension from Indian raids having been allayed, the way was opened to prosecute the work of settlement without interruption. Strangers came pouring in from far and near, and Williamson, though anxious to welcome and entertain them all, was sometimes hard pressed in the effort to fulfil his own desire. M'Clure relates that the captain told him one day that he expected much company shortly, but had not room to entertain them. "He asked me how long it would take to erect and complete a house forty by sixteen feet, a storey and a half in height, all material delivered, no plastering, all ceiled. I replied, 'Three days.' He said, 'Do it.' Working night and day, the work was completed to his satisfaction in forty-

eight hours. He paid me four hundred dollars for the job."

This is but one example of how Williamson, with characteristic hospitality, strove to entertain all who made their way to his rising town. He lavished his hospitality without respect of persons ; and the prince and the peasant, the hunter and the lawyer, the rough backwoodsman and the metropolitan gentleman, were equally welcome to his bountiful board.

CHAPTER VI

VISIT OF THE DUKE DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULT—EXTRACTS FROM HIS JOURNAL

AMONG those who visited the settlement and enjoyed the hospitality of Williamson was the Duke de la Rochefoucault, a distinguished French exile, who, with several travelling companions, arrived at Bath in June, 1795, and was sumptuously entertained for several days. In the journal of the duke an interesting account is given of the history of the purchase and allotment of the Genesee Tract, and it is especially valuable as furnishing a graphic description by an eye-witness of the condition of the settlement, Williamson's management and methods of work, and the habits of his private life.

The duke and his companions made their way to Bath from Painted Post by the undulating road cut straight through the midst of forests, which the captain's

pioneers had constructed. On their arrival they found that Captain Williamson had gone to Canandaigua tc preside as a Judge at the Sessions, but that he was expected to return in two days. It was a matter of some importance to them to meet him, and accordingly they resolved to make an excursion to the small lakes, and return to Bath in three days, when they would be sure to find the captain at home.

During this excursion the duke learned much of the nature and history of the tract of country which Williamson had laboured to open up, and the information thus acquired is set forth at some length in the pages of his journal.

Finding Williamson at Friendsmill, they returned with him to Bath, and inspected the new town, with the help of the captain's personal attendance.

"At Bath," writes the duke, "we were led by a train of reflections to observe how much the success of a settlement depends on the activity, judicious management, incessant application, and steady prosecution of a well-concerted plan; success, indeed, must necessarily crown not only this sort of an undertaking, but all others when thus planned and executed."

In the management of the sales of land, he points

out, everything centred round Williamson. He was the "sole creator, director, and mainspring of every active purchase and sale made and negotiated. Land which was first sold for one dollar per acre, in two years' time was sold for three; and the produce of about 800,000 acres disposed of in this way by Captain Williamson has not only refunded the purchase money and the whole amount of the expenses incurred, but also, by his own confession, yielded a net profit of £50,000.

"Captain Williamson," the duke continues, "constantly resides in the centre of his settlements, which circumstance gives him a very superior advantage over all the great landowners, private speculators, and trading companies who reside in towns. He frequently concludes a contract and removes long difficulty in the course of a few minutes' conversation, so that the purchaser, pleased with the soil, the trifling purchase money, and the good reception he has received from the captain, imparts his satisfaction to the whole neighbourhood, and generally brings along with his own family some new settlers.

"Captain Williamson's land is free from all dispute or question concerning his right of occupancy; his claims are strictly legal, and all his land properly ascertained and marked out. The purchasers can, therefore, with

entire security, extend their operations over every part of their settlement. This is an important additional advantage to the sale and purchase of land, which is too little attended to by those who are engaged in speculations of this nature.

"His land is always sold with a proviso that a number of acres be equal to the number of families which shall come to settle within eighteen months; they who buy small shares of from 500 to 1000 acres are bound only to promise one family; and if he should sell again before the expiration of eighteen months, the new purchaser is rendered liable to the original contract, for the captain is sensible that it is in his interest to act uniformly in a mild, just, and condescending manner.

"Such families as are extremely poor the captain supplies with a cow, an ox, or some house to live in; but this generosity he exercises with great prudence and discretion.

"Captain Williamson never establishes a settlement without having previously made such arrangements as shall secure a regular supply of provisions to the inhabitants. His own stores he never opens, unless it should happen that settlers, from want of prudence or propriety, are exposed to want. Were he to open them

before, the industry of the inhabitants would be quickly relaxed, which, in all new settlements, it is highly necessary to foster and stimulate.

"He encourages every new settlement by taking himself a share of it. When five or six new settlers have formed the project of building their houses together, he always adds a superior one to them at his own expense. This expense, which at first seems to carry with it an air of generosity, is really founded on the soundest policy. The share on which Williamson builds generally acquires ten times its former value. A purchaser or tenant soon appears, and the different houses and mills which he has erected have, without exception, produced two or three times as much as they cost.

"In addition to these prominent traits of his management, he employs all the various means which the peculiarity of situation in other circumstances may offer. Independently of the medical stores, which he keeps in all the chief places of his settlements, he encourages, by his liberality, races and all other games and pastimes of young people. He is attempting also to establish horse-racing, with a view to improve the breed of horses, and keeps himself a set of beautiful stallions.

"Captain Williamson has now nearly put the finish-

ing stroke to the great undertaking. Next autumn he proposes to sail for England, and return the following spring with a choice assemblage of horses, cattle, and sheep of the best breeds he can obtain, and a collection of models of all implements of agriculture, the materials of which are so nicely calculated and so well made in that country.

"Captain Williamson will not only procure to his extensive possessions singular advantages over those of other landowners, but also become the benefactor of America at large, whose agriculture he cannot fail to improve.

"What I have related on this head is not merely the result of what we heard from the captain himself during our stay at Bath, but it tallies correctly with the information we afterwards collected at Genesee.

"Captain Williamson is universally respected and beloved. How glorious is his career! How enviable his destination! How much more important than that of a dissipated courtier or a mercenary stock-jobber!"

In the course of his inspection the duke found a school in process of building at Bath. It was Williamson's intention to endow the school with some hundred acres of land, and to take upon himself the maintenance

of the schoolmaster until the money paid for the instruction of the children should be sufficient for his support. A session-house and prison were also being put up, and a new inn was being built which, in addition to other conveniences, should contain a ball-room. Near Bath, on the other side of the Conhocton, were erected a corn-mill and two saw-mills, worked by the great quantity of water at hand, and capable of considerable enlargement; while a bridge was being constructed across the river for the purpose of opening a free and uninterrupted communication with the country on the other side.

After speaking of the farms in the neighbourhood of Bath, and the establishment of other settlements, and relating briefly the threatening conflict with Governor Simcoe, which ended so fortunately, the Duke passes from the public to the private life of Williamson.

"I have spoken," he says, "of Captain Williamson merely in his public character, as the founder of the most extensive settlement which methinks has been formed in America. I shall now follow him into his private life, where his hospitality and other social qualities render him equally conspicuous and amiable. It is but doing him justice to say that in him are

united all the civility and good nature and cheerfulness which a liberal education, united to a proper knowledge of the world, can impart. We spent four days at his home, from an early hour in the morning until late at night, without ever feeling ourselves otherwise than at home. Perhaps it is the fairest eulogium we can pass on his free and easy certainty to say that all the time of our stay he seemed as much at his ease as if we had not been present. He transacted all his business in our presence, and was actively employed all the day long. We were present at his receiving persons of different ranks and descriptions, with whom the apartment he allots to business is generally crowded. He receives them all with the same civility, attention, cheerfulness, and good nature. They come to him prepossessed with a certain confidence in him, and they are never dissatisfied. He is at all times ready to converse with any who have business to transact with him. He will break off his conversation with his friends or get up from his dinner for the sake of dispatching those who wish to speak to him. From this constant readiness to receive all who have business with him, should any conclude that he is influenced by a thirst for gain, this surmise would be contradicted by the unanimous testi-

mony of all who have had dealings with him; but were it ever so undeniable that money is his leading and sole object, it is highly desirable that all who are swayed by the same passion would gratify it in the same just, honourable, and useful manner.

"Though we slept at the inn, we spent the whole day from morning to night with Williamson, where we enjoyed tranquillity more than in the noisy inn, which is always crowded with travellers. The habitation of the captain consists of several small houses formed of trunks of trees and joiner's work, which at present makes a very irregular whole, but which he intends soon to improve. His way of living is simple, neat, and good. Every day he has a joint of fresh meat, vegetables, and wine. We met with no circumstances of pomp or luxury, but found ease, good manners, and plenty in the useful yet comfortable mansion in which the captain lives.

"Our first intention was to have stayed at Captain Williamson's only one day; but, in compliance with his wish, we added another, and necessity compelled us to stay a third. When on the point of setting out I perceived that my horse was lame, and though we were assured that he might make the journey without the

least inconvenience, yet Captain Williamson obligingly insisted on our staying a day longer.

"Mrs. Williamson, whom we had not seen for the first two days, made her appearance on the third at dinner. To judge from her deportment, timidity had till then deprived us of her company. She is a native of Boston, and became acquainted there with the captain, who in the contest with Great Britain had resided at Boston as a prisoner of war. She is yet but a young woman, of fair complexion, civil, though of few words, and the mother of two lovely children, one of whom, a girl three years old, is the finest and handsomest I ever saw."

After the polished manner of his race, the duke did not fail to make his opinion of their children known to the parents, and thus further ingratiated himself into their favour. So, on a footing of perfect friendship, and with promises on both sides of correspondence and mutual help, the duke and his companions brought their interesting and prolonged visit to Williamson to a reluctant end.

CHAPTER VII

THE STEUBEN COUNTY — DIVISION OF TOWNS: BATH THE CAPITAL — THE FIRST NEWSPAPER — RELIGION — THE FIRST SCHOOL — THE BATH RACES — PROGRESS OF SPECULATION—COMPLETION OF TOWN ORGANISATION—COURTHOUSE, JAIL, AND THEATRE—SETTLEMENT OF PERTHSHIRE EMIGRANTS AT BIG SPRINGS OR CALEDONIA —METHOD OF ALLOTMENT

N March, 1796, through the influence of Colonel Benjamin Walker, a close and intimate friend of Williamson, the south part of the County of Ontario was disjoined and created into a separate county under the name of Steuben. The name was derived from Baron Friedrich von Steuben, a German officer who had distinguished himself under Fredrick the Great, and who had later offered his services to the Americans in the War of Independence. In this war, while he maintained his distinguished conduct in several well-fought battles,

his principal service lay in the thorough drill and discipline which he introduced into the American army. He sacrificed a great part of his own property for the maintenance of the soldiers and officers under him, and when after the war he was rewarded with a pension of 2,500 dollars, and several grants of lands, he gave most of these away to poor soldiers. He died on 28th November, 1794; and Colonel Walker, who had been his aide-de-camp, and who had been left as his residuary legatee, recognised the desirability of perpetuating his substantial service by some perpetual memorial. Accordingly, that part of the County of Ontario in which the Genesee Tract was situated was erected into the County of Steuben, and was provided for in the Act of Erection as follows:—

"That it shall and may be lawful to and for the Justices of the Court of General Sessions for the said County of Steuben, or a majority of them, at any General Sessions of the Peace, to divide the county into as many towns as they shall deem necessary, and that the said Justices, at any such General Sessions, shall fix and direct the place or places, in each of said towns so made at which the first town meeting for electing town officers shall be held, and all future meet-

ings in any such town shall be held at such place as a majority of the inhabitants thereof shall by open vote at any town meeting appoint."

The county officers were appointed by the Governor, *viz.*, Charles Williamson, first judge; William Kersey, Abraham Bradley, and Eleazer Lindsley, judges; Stephen Ross, surrogate; George D. Cooper, county clerk; William Dunn, sheriff. All of them were duly qualified except Charles Williamson.

On June 21, 1796, in pursuance of the Act, the Court of Common Pleas and General Sessions of the Peace met in the land office at Bath. William Kersey presided, assisted by Judges Bradley and Lindsley, and some of the Justices of the Peace in Commission, and an order was made and entered that the said Justices report upon the erection and division of towns at the next October term of the Court. At that term the minutes show that all the Justices of the Peace of the county were present, and it is presumed that they then and there performed their duty, but no report can be found. But the *Albany Gazette* contains the following statement:—"Agreeably to a provision in the law erecting a part of Ontario into a new county by the name of Steuben, the Court of Sessions have divided

that county into the six following towns :—*viz.*, Bath, Painted Post, Frederichstown (afterwards Wayne), Middletown (afterwards Addison), Canisteo and Dansville."

Bath, which was made the capital town of Steuben County, was bounded on the north by the county line, east by Lake Keuka and Frederichstown, south by Painted Post and Middletown, and west by Dansville, as subsequent records, and the exercise of municipal jurisdiction, show.

After the erection of the county, and the division of its towns, Williamson was elected its representative member to the Legislative Assembly of New York, and held the appointment for four successive terms. But his energies were still chiefly directed to the development of the town of Bath. He determined to make it worthy of its title of the capital town of the county. To this end he resolved, in the first place, to establish a newspaper. William Kersey, the newly-appointed judge, an attaché of the land office, was dispatched, in the spring of 1796, to Pennsylvania to procure the necessary material. From York, Pa., on April 18th, Kersey wrote the captain : "The printing press is not yet completed, but the workmen tell me they will have it done in a few days." James Edie, of Northumber-

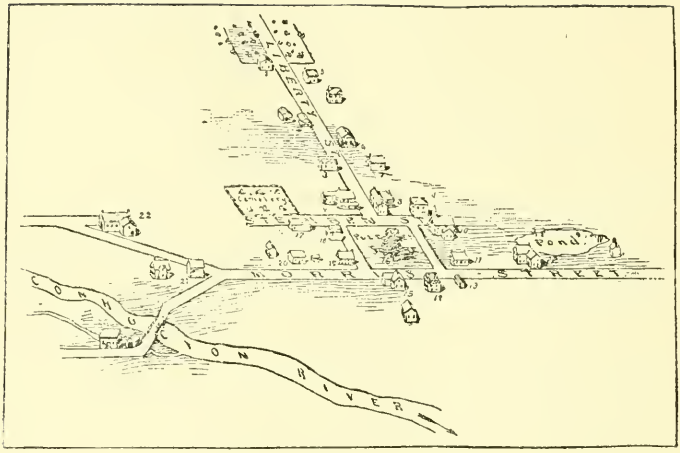
land, a practical printer, was engaged to bring on the press and material. This he did early in the summer, and formed for the purpose of publication a partnership with Kersey. They set up their press in a log building on the south-west corner of St. Patrick Square, where General Averell's residence now stands. There, on October 19, 1796, was issued the first number of the "*Bath Gazette and Genesee Advertiser*, published by William Kersey and James Edie, Bath, Steuben, N.Y." at the price of two dollars per annum. This was the first newspaper printed in the State west of Oneida County. It was printed as a small folio sheet, fifteen inches by nine, with three broad columns, and was fairly done. According to Turner, it was still published in 1799. It was probably discontinued in 1800, on the retirement of Captain Williamson from the agency, and what became of the press is not known.

That great influence in civilisation—the Printing Press — was thus established ; and one might have thought that at least side by side with it there should have sprung up the institution of religion which in the history of the Old World had done so much for the life and progress of mankind. But this was not so. At the outset of the settlement no zeal for religion

seems to have mingled with the pioneering enthusiasm of the settlers; or, at least, the sentiment of religion did not find expression in church buildings or ecclesiastical forms. "The village fathers," it has been pithily said, "had been forward to provide a hippodrome and an opera house for the people, but to make ready a place for the worship of God did not seem to occur to them as a part of their duty. This task, as usual, devolved upon the mothers of the village." But it is easy at this late date, from our advanced Church progress and missionary development, to look back to those early settlers, and sharply criticise their apparent lack. Let us first be sure, however, that we are criticising them with a legitimate standard. More than a hundred years ago the missionary agencies of the Church, with which Christendom is so familiar to-day, did not exist. There was no organised society, whose treasury could be drawn upon for funds to carry the Gospel into the wilderness which Williamson was so steadily opening up. The Church, through lack of resources, was compelled to leave the new district severely alone. The pioneers themselves were at first too hard pressed to be able to provide the necessary ordinances, and the stern task of subduing a pathless

forest demanded all their time and energy, and left them unable of themselves to organise and develop the religious life of the community. In modern times, and in places where civilisation, as the result of a process of many centuries, seems to have reached its heights, it requires a special class of men banded together in a distinct profession to sustain the ordinances and work of religion; and there are places in our own land in these days where, without help which is independent of the population, the Church and clergy would have no existence. Is it any wonder, therefore, that those early settlers, amid circumstances of primitive civilisation which taxed them to the utmost, found it impossible to add religion in the form of church life to their other manifold labours? Williamson's task was not that of a missionary. His work was to open up highways through the tractless country and establish settlements, by which the missionary, with others, might follow, and where he might establish his calling. What were considered the best means to this end were employed, and special work was left to those who were specially qualified to perform it.

It would be unfair, however, to conclude from the absence of formal church life that those men who first cleared the way for the splendid progress that followed



VILLAGE OF BATH IN 1804.

1—Log house, formerly printing office of the *Bath Gazette*.
2—Bull's Tavern.
3—Log house.
4—Helm's residence.
5—Frame house, afterwards occupied by Rev. J. Niles.
6—Log house.
7—H. A. Townsend's house.
8—McClure's house and store.
9—Grocery.
10—Court House.
11—Turner's house.
12—Jonathan T. Haight, lawyer.
13—Log house.
14—Pulteney Land Agent's residence.
15—Land office.
16—Liberty tree (blown down in 1825).
17—Bath Jail.
18—School house.
19—D. Cameron's house.
20—Metcalf's Tavern.
21—Blacksmith shop.
22—Theatre.
23—Helm's grist and saw mills.

[*To face* p. 81.

were entirely destitute of religion. They had all come from countries where religion was a power; and if the form was absent, the spirit of religion remained to influence their life. There is nothing to show that the moral condition of the community was in any way worse, during the ten years that elapsed before the first religious meeting was established, than that of any other community where religion, both in form and in spirit, is largely in evidence.

For the end that Captain Williamson had in view a school for the education of the youth of the new town was an absolute necessity. In the journal of the Duke de la Rochefoucault reference has already been found to the building of a school, and to Williamson's intention to maintain the schoolmaster until a sufficient maintenance should be otherwise provided. This school, a frame building on the north-west corner of Pulteney Square, was completed in 1796. In the picture of the village of Bath in 1804, made from the personal recollections of Colonel W. H. Bull, the site on which this school was located can be noted. One Robert Hunter was the first schoolmaster whom Williamson appointed, and who appears to have arrived early in the history of the settlement, and to have begun work before the schoolhouse

was provided. This fact is authenticated by Charles Williamson's cash-book, which is now in the possession of the Hon. A. J. M'Call, of Bath. In this cash-book are found the following entries :—

"1793, June 13. To cash advanced Mr. Hunter as schoolmaster at Bath, $20.

"1794, February 7. Robert Hunter, on acct. of salary, $1.61.

"1794, April 23. 1 doz. spelling-books and ½ ream cartridge paper, 1 shilling, 1 penny."

It was at this school that Colonel Bull received his preliminary education in 1805, when one Dixon was the schoolmaster. The schoolhouse was removed when the old stone jail was built in 1808.

In the same year (1796) which saw the institution of the first newspaper and the erection of the school-house, Williamson developed the races which he had instituted in the previous year to commemorate the success which had attended the sales of land, and the consequent increase in emigration. A racecourse of regulation standard had been carefully cleared and graded east of May Street. It was a half-mile track. He now directed his men to put the racecourse in thorough order, and caused an attractive advertisement to be

published in the New York and Pennsylvania newspapers, announcing that a fair and races would be held at Bath on the 20th September. When they took place, it is said that not less than two thousand persons were gathered in the new capital to witness them.

Judge G. H. M'Master, in his history, has given this graphic account of the event: "On the day and at the place appointed for the race in the proclamation, sportsmen from New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore were in attendance. The high blades of Virginia and Maryland, the fast boys of Jersey, the wise jockeys of Long Island, men of Ontario, Pennsylvania, and Canada, settlers, choppers, gamesters, and hunters, to the number of fifteen hundred or two thousand, met on the pine plains to see the horses run — a number as great, considering the condition of the region where they met, as now assembles at State fairs and mass meetings. The races passed off brilliantly. Captain Williamson, himself a sportsman of spirit and discretion, entered a Southern mare, Virginia Nell. High Sheriff Dunn entered Silk Stocking, a New Jersey horse — quadrupeds of renown even at the present day. Money was plenty and the betting lively. The ladies of the two dignitaries who owned the rival animals bet each three hundred dollars

and a pipe of wine on the horses of their lords, or, as otherwise related, poured seven hundred dollars into the apron of a third lady, who was stakeholder. Silk Stocking was victorious."

It is a characteristic of the typical Briton that wherever his lot is cast he proceeds, if possible, to hold races for the perpetuation of the national pastime. Troops on a campaign of war have been known, in spite of adverse circumstances and in face of danger, to indulge in the excitement of a well-run race, and camels have been pressed into the service when horses were scarce. The national love of horse-racing in a multitude so largely composed of men of the Old Country may well account for the success which attended the races thus instituted and held by Williamson. It might be questioned, however, if, in the face of the necessity of so much constant and arduous labour, which made inevitable the neglect of the organisation of better things, it was fitting that time and money should thus be expended. But Williamson, keen sportsman and lover of horses though he was, was not the man to waste time, money, or energy in the indulgence of a pleasure which ended with itself. Of an intensely practical nature and far-seeing policy, he recognised that events of this kind, which gathered

together a great multitude from far and near, would attract a larger attention to his lands and town. He was anxious to make rapid and profitable sales of the land in his charge; and he knew that it was necessary to create some excitement which would bring strangers to look at them. And so, in pursuance of the task which he had undertaken when he became the agent of the "Association," he set up these races as an attraction that, when men saw the advantages on the spot, they might be induced to emigrate to the new district.

With every effort thus put forward to secure settlers, the town of Bath steadily grew. Weld, an English traveller, who visited the town in the later part of 1796, wrote: "Bath is a post and principal town in the western part of the State of New York. Though laid out only three years ago, yet it contains about thirty houses, and is increasing very fast. Among the houses are several stores and shops well furnished with goods, and a tavern that would not be thought meanly of in any part of America. The town of Bath stands on a plain, surrounded on three sides by hills of moderate height. The plain is almost wholly divested of trees, but the hills are still uncleared, and have a very pleasing appearance from the town. At the foot of the hills

runs a stream of pure water over a bed of gravel, which is called Conhocton Creek. There is a very considerable fall in the Creek just above the town, which affords the finest seats for mills possible, and extensive saw and flour mills have already been erected upon it."

The efforts which Williamson put forth, and the attractions and advantages which he held out, soon raised speculation in the new country to a fever-heat. The traveller just quoted gives the following letter in illustration :

"*To the Printers of the 'Wilkes-Barre Gazette.'*

"GENTLEMEN,—It is painful to reflect that speculation has raged to such a degree of late that honest industry, and all the humble virtues that walk in her train, are discouraged and rendered unfashionable. It is to be lamented, too, that dissipation is sooner introduced in new settlements than industry and labour.

"I have been led to these reflections by conversing with my son, who has just returned from the Lakes of Genesee, though he has neither been to the one nor the other; in short, he has been to Bath—the celebrated Bath—and has returned both a speculator and a gentle-

man, having spent his money, swapped away my horse, caught the fever and ague, and, what is infinitely worse, that horrid disorder which some call the terraphobia. We can hear nothing from the poor creature (in his ravings) but of the captain, Billy (meaning Williamson and William Dunn), of ranges, townships, numbers, thousands, hundreds, acres, Bath, fairs, races, heats, bets, purses, Silk Stockings, fortunes, fevers, agues, etc. My son has a part of a township for sale, and it is diverting enough to hear him narrate its pedigree, qualities, and situation. In fine, it lies near Bath, and the captain himself once owned and for a long time reserved it. It cost my son but five dollars an acre ; he was offered six and a-half a minute after purchase, but he is positively determined to have eight, besides some precious preserves. One thing is very much in my son's favour—he has six years' credit. Another thing is still more so—he is not worth a sou, nor ever will be at this rate.

"Previous to his late excursion he had worked well, and was contented at home on my farm, but now work is out of the question with him. There is no managing my boy at home ; these golden dreams still beckon him to Bath, where, he says, no one need work or starve ; where, though a man may have the ague

nine months in the year, he may console himself in spending the other three fashionably at the races.

"A Farmer.

"Hanover, October 5, 1796."

The farmer evidently writes under strong feeling, and from a conservative standpoint. Speculation was to him a deadly sin. But his amusing letter is interesting as indicating the progress of speculation in the Genesee Tract, whereby Williamson's trust was being so admirably fulfilled.

In the early part of the year 1797 the town organisation was completed, and preparations were made for the annual town meeting. The meeting was held at Metcalf's hostelry on 4th April for the purpose of electing town officers. Charles Cameron was elected supervisor, and James Edie town-clerk; and in addition there were appointed commissioners of highways, constables, overseers of the poor, overseers of the highways, fence inspectors, assessors, pound-masters, and commissioners of schools. Charles Williamson was elected a commissioner of schools.

The supervisor elected at that meeting having resigned, a special town meeting was held on 19th June

of the same year, and George M'Clure was elected to fill the vacancy. The number of road districts was seven, and two hundred and thirty-five persons were assessed for highway purposes.

The wolf and the panther were still in the land, and the night-time was made hideous by their frightful howls. It was found necessary to guard carefully against these dangerous neighbours, and efforts were also made to exterminate them. A number of ordinances was passed with regard to fences, estrays, etc., and, in addition to what was given by the State, a bounty of twenty shillings was given for every wolf or panther killed within the town. The process of extermination, however, was naturally long ; and as late as 1828 there are records showing that ten dollars were given as the bounty for the scalp of a full-grown wolf.

The year 1797 also witnessed the completed erection of the courthouse and jail. The courthouse was a modern structure, a storey and a half high, with a portico, flanked by wings, and located on the east side of Pulteney Square. It was a neat and commodious structure, well fitted for the purposes for which it was intended. The jail was constructed of squared timber, and was erected in Steuben Street, not far from the schoolhouse.

A theatre also was built as an attraction to the new town. It stood at the junction of Steuben and Morris Streets, and was made ready for use at the end of the year.

The population of the town increased and its appearance improved. A splendid regiment of militia was organised in the county, and in 1797 Williamson was commissioned by the Governor of the State of New York as a "lieutenant-colonel commanding a regiment of militia in the county of Steuben."

In 1798 a party of emigrants from Perthshire, Scotland, emigrated to America. They landed at New York, travelled westward as far as Johnstown, Montgomery County, and halted there to determine on some permanent location. Captain Williamson, hearing of the arrival of his countrymen, made a journey to see them. He found them poor in purse, with nothing to pay for lands, and with but little even for their present subsistence. But they came from the

> "Land of the forest and the rock,
> Of dark blue lake and mighty river,
> Of mountains reared aloft to mock
> The storm's career, the lightning's shock,"

They were rich in courage, in a spirit of perseverance,

in habits of industry, and in all the elements that life in the wilderness and success required. Captain Williamson proved himself to them not only a patron but a benefactor. He offered them a favourable location in the neighbourhood of the "Big Springs," gave them land at three dollars per acre, payable in wheat at six shillings a bushel, and furnished them with provisions until they should be able to help themselves. Four of their number were sent out to view the lands. They were more than pleased with the allotment Williamson had made, and on their return met him on his way from Geneva to Canandaigua. He drew up a writing on the road, and the bargain was closed. In March, 1799, the Scottish adventurers journeyed from Johnstown to the "Big Springs." This had been the name of the locality as far back as the time of the first English occupation of Niagara; but in honour of the new settlers Williamson gave it the new name of Caledonia.

The Springs being on the great trail from Tioga Point to Fort Niagara had long been a favourite camping ground; and, previous to the advent of the Scotsmen, Fuller and Peterson had become squatters there, built log-houses, and entertained travellers. This furnished the Scottish settlers a temporary shelter. John Smith,

one of Captain Williamson's surveyors, soon arrived and surveyed their lands, so planning the surveys that each allotment would have a front upon the streams. Log-houses were soon erected in the primitive manner, small patches of summer crops planted, and the new settlers were soon under way, though struggling with stinted means against all the hardships and privations of backwoods' life. On their arrival Captain Williamson had promptly given orders to Alexander Macdonald, his agent and clerk at Williamsburg, to supply some provisions. Wheat was procured at Dansville and ground at Wadsworth's Mill at Conesus, and pork was obtained at the store at Williamsburg. Captain Williamson also furnished them with some cows, and, in addition to other encouragements, donated one hundred and fifty acres for a "glebe," and fifty acres for school purposes. He erected at the Springs a grist and sawmill, which was completed in about three years.

The general method which Captain Williamson adopted in his dealings with settlers consisted in granting land in small portions and on long credit to individuals who would immediately improve it; and in large portions and on shorter credit to others who purchased on specula-

tion. The lands in both cases were mortgaged for the purchase money. Thus, were the money not paid at the appointed time, it was impossible for him to be a loser, as the lands in such a case returned to him; and if they happened to be at all improved, as they frequently were, he became a considerable gainer even by having them returned on his hands. Moreover, if a poor man, willing to settle on his land, had not sufficient money to build a house and to go on with the necessary improvements, Williamson at once supplied him with what money he wanted for that purpose, or sent his own workmen to build a house, at the same time taking the man's note, at three, four, or five years, for the cost of the house and appurtenances, with interest. If the man proved unable to pay at the appointed time, the house, mortgaged like the lands, reverted to the original proprietor, and the money arising from its sale, together with the sale of the farm adjoining was, on account of improvements, generally found to be in excess of the amount promised in payment of the same. It was seldom, however, that a man, if at all industrious, failed in the payment of his liabilities at the appointed time. The granting of land on such easy terms could not and did not fail to attract to the country a large number of speculators.

CHAPTER VIII

WILLIAMSON'S PAMPHLET ON THE GENESEE COUNTRY — NAVIGATION OF THE RIVERS — RAFTS AND ARK-BUILDING — COMMERCIAL PROSPECTS — THE MANSION OF SPRINGFIELD

N the opening up of the tract of country with which he had been entrusted, it was apparent to Williamson from the first that much depended on the concentration of the townships. The advantages of concentration had been already seen in the case of some French settlements on the St. Lawrence, in Canada, where farms were laid out with narrow river fronts, and the houses built within a short distance of each other. Following this example, Colonel Williamson, in his letters, urged the advantages to be secured, in the settlement of all new countries, by having the farms so located that the dwellings would not be far separated. Unfortunately,

however, in many instances this method was not followed; in some it was found impracticable under the existing conditions; and accordingly many settlers commenced their clearings and erected their log-houses miles away from their nearest neighbours. In spite of this disadvantage, however, the work of establishing settlements went steadily forward.

Williamson, as has been already seen, spared no effort to induce emigration to the country. His races and brilliant assemblies were all means to this one end; and in 1798 he enlisted the printing press into his service, and in an interestingly written pamphlet entitled "A Description of the Genesee Country: its Rapidly Progressive Population and Improvements," illustrated with valuable maps, he gave an enthusiastic account of the many attractions offered by the new settlements. In the course of this pamphlet of thirty-seven pages, written as a series of letters, he says:

"The rapid progress of this new country in every comfort and convenience has not only caused the emigration of vast numbers of substantial farmers, but also men of liberal education, who find here a society not inferior to that in the oldest country settlements in America. The schools are far from being indifferent,

and even the foundations for public libraries are already laid. The gentleman fond of a rural life or the amusements of the field may here gratify himself; he may find a situation for a country seat that will please the most romantic fancy; the excellence of the climate and soil will afford him every certainty for a great return for his trouble and expense as a farmer, and with little care his garden may equal any gentleman's in England. Indeed, with the advantages of the soil and climate, the great variety of situations can only be equalled in the finest parts of England.

"You will find that the climate of the Genesee country not only forms a very interesting part of its advantages, but also of its natural history; those parching heats that, on the south side of the Allegany mountains, seem to dry up every particle of nourishment from the plants, are never known in this country; in almost every instance a hot day is succeeded by a plentiful shower, which preserves throughout the summer a constant verdure, and affords to us the finest pastures and meadows on the continent; the nights are proportionally cool, and a traveller from the sea-coast is surprised to find in the dog-days a couple of blankets a comfortable covering. The frosts have never been so severe as to stop the

operation of the mills, provided very trifling precaution is used. So remarkable was this circumstance in 1797, that a number of sleds came from Pennsylvania to the Bath mills, a distance of seventy miles. All this is owing to the relative situation of the Genesee country. It is bounded on the north and west by great bodies of water which do not freeze, and in this direction there is not one mountain. The northerly and westerly winds which scourge the coast of America by blowing over the Allegany mountains, covered with snow late in the spring and early in the fall, are tempered by passing over these waters; and these mountains to the south of us do, at the same time, prevent the destructive effects of the southerly breeze in winter, which, by suddenly thawing the frozen wheat fields, would destroy thousands of bushels. While the Lakes and Allegany mountains are in existence, so long will the inhabitants of the Genesee country be blessed with their pleasant, temperate climate.

"The town of Bath has this season increased considerably, and much improvement has been made on the different roads leading to it. The opening of a market to Baltimore for our lumber and fat cattle has also raised a spirit amongst the inhabitants to improve the navigation of the Conhocton. A handsome courthouse

and a very secure and convenient gaol are added to the number of our buildings; the printer of the *Bath Gazette* dispenses weekly not less than five hundred papers; and the inhabitants of the town have recently encouraged a clergyman to settle amongst them."

These extracts give us a clear idea of the condition of the town and country at that date; and, in addition to the advantages mentioned by Williamson in his pamphlet, another was added in the following year. Until then letters were carried to Northumberland—the nearest place on the south for their deposit—by the primitive method already described. Post-riders rode to and from that place, making the trip once a fortnight. But in 1799 Williamson improved on this by establishing the first mail-coaches in America, which ran between New York and Geneva, Ontario County, and a more satisfactory mail system was thus begun.

In Williamson's pamphlet on the Genesee country reference is made to the opening of a market to Baltimore by means of the navigation of the Conhocton River. The navigation of the river for this purpose was for some time an absorbing question. The roads, as might be expected in that early period, were difficult for the conveyance of the heavy produce which the

newly-opened country yielded, and no other channel of transportation than that of the natural waterways was regarded with favour. Accordingly, great efforts were made to remove obstructions from the smaller affluents of the great rivers, so that navigation would be open from the interior to the sea. It was found that in the spring and fall the Conhocton River from Bath might, with little labour, be made fairly navigable for rafts, boats, and other craft; and it was resolved to transport by this means all the products of the north-western part of the country (chiefly consisting of lumber and grain) to the great marts of Philadelphia and Baltimore. In the spring of 1798 two rafts of boards were started from Mud Creek, and in a very brief time and at a very small cost were landed safely in Baltimore. This settled the question of navigation for that species of craft; and, as the navigation was gradually improved, the inhabitants found an open and easy water highway for the carriage of their goods to the most profitable markets.

In the year 1800 an advance was made on the species of raft that was first used. In March of that year an ark eighty feet long by twenty wide was built at White's sawmill, and when completed was loaded with wheat and lumber, and launched on the river for Baltimore, where

it duly arrived in safety with its freight. Two others with a similar cargo followed a month later from Bartles' Mills, on Mud Creek, and met with similar success. They were the first ventures of the kind, and created quite a sensation in the country. The arks were the invention of a Mr. Kryder, who, in 1792, built one at Standing Stone, on the Juniata, loaded it with wheat and whisky, and ran it down the Susquehanna to Baltimore. The important part which the ark played in the commerce of the Genesee country in the early years of its history makes a description of the construction of the craft of some interest. "A frame was made of three sticks of square timber, eight by twelve inches; the two outside timbers, fifty-five feet long, were placed eight feet from the centre stick, which was seventy-five feet long. These were securely framed together by means of shorter ties, or girths, mortised into them. At the bow and stern a similar timber extended from the ends of the outside pieces, uniting at the end of the centre piece, so as to make the extremities sharp enough to aid in giving direction to its movements, and to meet with less resistance. This frame was then completely planked, and caulked as tightly as possible. It was then turned over, the planked side being under, and the whole shoved into

the water. Studs or studding four or five feet long and five feet apart were mortised into the outside timber, and planked up on the outside. The inside was ceiled, so as to make a tight rectangular box or hold. In the solid posts, at the terminal points, was firmly embedded a stout wooden pin to hold the oars, which directed the course of the craft, but did not propel it. The oars were made from small, straight white pines, light, dry, and tapering, some thirty feet in length and eight inches in diameter at the butt, in which was cut a gain for about five feet to receive the blade. This was made from a plank about fifteen feet long and eighteen or twenty inches in width, sawed for the purpose, tapering, being about two and a half inches thick at one end, an inch at the other, rounded at the thinner end, and fastened securely in its place in the oar-stems with wooden pins. At a point where the oar balanced a hole was bored and a slot made to give play vertically to the oar when it was placed on the oar-pin, and so balanced that the blade would just dip lightly in the water. The small end of the oar was whittled down to a convenient size so that it could be readily grasped by the hand. The ark, except at the bow and stern, and a small space in the centre where the cabin was built, was securely covered with

boards, as well to protect the cargo as to furnish a smooth walk for the oarsman."

The rafting and the ark-building were a source of great elation to Colonel Williamson. The industry of the country was thereby increased, and Bath itself, as the head of navigation and the shipping point to market for grain, lumbers, and other products, became more celebrated. The place became a busy scene of exportation. Storehouses were built at convenient sites for the storage of cargo. During the winter loaded sleighs came crowding in from Geneva and Genesee with produce to be stored and afterwards shipped. When the spring freshets came the arks were floated to the storehouses, the grain was poured into them in bulk, and the arks thus freighted set out on their voyage to reach the markets. Their course was down the Conhocton and Chemung to the Susquehanna, then down the Susquehanna to tide-water. They did not always reach their destination. Unfitted to cope adequately with the many difficulties that attended the navigation of the rivers, about one in ten emptied its contents into the water as it was dashed upon some unknown obstruction, or was stranded. Yet despite difficulty and loss, thousands upon thousands of bushels of grain found their way to market through this precarious

channel. The expectations of the future of Bath became rosy in the light of all this commercial prosperity. Williamson's sanguine temperament overflowed with bright anticipations of its growth and greatness, and he believed that it was bound to become the great commercial metropolis of South-Western New York. What it might have developed into, had the condition of things that then obtained continued, would probably have been in the line of Williamson's bright dreams of future greatness; but it was not to be. Twenty-five years later, the Erie Canal, proposed in 1808 and started in 1811, was completed and opened; and the Crooked Lake Canal Company, connecting the Lakes Keuka and Seneca, made the head of Lake Keuka, eight miles from Bath, the head canal navigation for that part of Western New York. This era of transportation by canal largely superseded that of the ark and raft on the rivers, and the Erie Canal did the carrying trade of the country in 1833, when the whistle of the locomotive was first heard in the land.

In the midst of all his judicial, legislative, military, and commercial duties, Colonel Williamson turned his versatile talents to the art of architecture, and in 1799 began to build on the farm of Springfield, near Lake

Salubria, a large mansion house, which he destined for his future residence, in place of the earlier house which had been built for him in the town of Bath. When finished it was the largest private dwelling in Western New York, and was so constructed that hospitality might be dispensed in it on a princely scale. Although necessarily built of wood, its spacious apartments, broad halls, and grand assembly room, with their high ceilings and heavy mouldings, all finished and furnished exquisitely after the latest fashion, gave it a character of magnificence which was universally admired. It was flanked by two wings, each as large as an ordinary dwelling-house, set off with piazzas and porticoes. Maude, who visited Williamson in 1800, describes it with approval. "The plan," he says, "is original, Captain Williamson being his own architect. I have seen no plans for country dwelling-houses that I would more readily adopt than Captain Williamson's. This is a single house with two stories and wings. The Americans have a great antipathy to wings; they invariably hold to the solid column, the cellar kitchen, and the dormer windows." The grounds of the mansion, in keeping with the building, were artistically laid out, and graced with ornamental trees and shrubs, and the then rare Lombardy poplars.

On its completion, in 1801, it was placed in charge of Major Presley Thornton, a kinsman of Washington, and an officer in the Revolution, who had just come from Virginia with a young wife of rare wit and beauty, long known as "The Madame," because of her graceful and commanding ways. On account of circumstances now to be explained, the intention of Williamson to use the house as a permanent abode was departed from. But it served him as a temporary home during the two years that elapsed between its completion and his return to Scotland. There for a time he maintained an elaborate establishment, and dispensed hospitality with a generous hand, attracting, by his brilliant assemblies, all the beauty and aristocracy of the Genesee country and the valley of the Susquehanna.

CHAPTER IX

DISAGREEMENT OF WILLIAMSON WITH HIS PRINCIPALS—RESIGNATION OF THE AGENCY—RESIDENCE AT SPRINGFIELD—THE THORNTONS

THE manifold labours in which Williamson engaged, the advantages he created or developed, and the improvements he effected, necessarily involved the expenditure of a considerable amount of money. We have seen how he caused the forest to be cleared, organised settlements, improved the navigation, built houses, a hotel, a gaol, a courthouse and a school, erected mills, and a theatre, and other structures that were demanded by the needs of a new town which he desired to make worthy of the position that had been assigned to it. In addition, he threw across the Conhocton the first river bridge constructed in the country, placed boats on Lake Ontario, and built, or contributed to the building

of, roads which were essential to the complete opening up of the country to the march of civilisation. The roads with which his name is associated are:—The State Road, from Fort Schuyler to Geneva, the Niagara Road, one from Lyons to Palmyra, one from Hopeton to Townsends, one from Seneca Falls to Lyons Mills, and another from Cushong to Hopeton.

His principals, far removed from the scene of actions, and knowing, therefore, imperfectly the exigencies of the circumstances, could not understand the laying out of so much capital. They erroneously considered the expenditure excessive, and declined to advance any more money.

About this time the Legislature of New York passed an Act authorising aliens for three years to take the title to real estate. The dissatisfaction of the principals prompted them to take advantage of this Act, and they decided to assume the titles in their own names, and place a new agent in charge.

Accordingly, there was an accounting and appraisal. Williamson assigned to his principals $551,699.78 worth of bonds, mortgages, and notes, and on March 31, 1801, conveyed to them the unsold lands, which were valued at $3,547,494.58. Besides the original purchase

he conveyed over 5,000 acres of land just west of the Genesee, the Cottinger tract in the Morris Reserve, 600 acres in the Military tract, and thousands of acres in Otsego, Kerkimer, Chenango, Clinton, Albany, and Montgomery counties. Under his administration he had expended, in purchasing lands, making improvements, and other expenses, $1,374,470.10; he had received for lands sold, $147,974.83; and besides this there was an indebtedness outstanding of about $300,000, the most of which was the unpaid purchase price of land outside of the original purchase. As a matter of fact, the result of the accounting showed a much better condition of affairs than had been anticipated; and the stewardship of Williamson is best justified by the fact that the Pulteney Estate found it necessary to spend but little afterwards, and has ever since kept up the sale of lands at continually advancing prices.

Through all the transaction Colonel Williamson's integrity came forth clear and unbroken. The English Syndicate far from having cause for dissatisfaction owed him a deep debt of gratitude for his devotion to his trust and for many shrewd financial moves. A large part of his payments he made in drafts; and at times when his principals were slow in remitting funds he raised

money by drawing on Morris, or some other friend at a distance, and hazarding the loss of three or four per cent. interest and twenty per cent. damages for non-acceptance, in the hope of getting money to meet it by the time the draft should be presented.

Colonel Williamson resigned his trust, and Colonel Robert Troup was appointed his successor in the agency.

To surrender a mission at the very time when it is about to be crowned by a successful issue; to give up the cherished work of years at the very moment of fruition, and to see others entering into one's labours is a trial not easy to bear. Colonel Williamson found it a hard experience, and his disappointment was keen. It is probable that after the accounting and the satisfactory result of it, the attitude of the Syndicate towards him became once more favourable. Sir William Pulteney, who held the major part of the shares, seems to have been the cause of the upturning; and a few years later, on October 10, 1804, he wrote thus to Dr. Roneayre from Weymouth: "I am much obliged to you for sending me that part of Mr. Troup's letter which relates to Mr. Williamson. He supposes that I have instigated some persons to resentment against him, which I can assure you is not the fact. I disapproved of the large sums

Mr. Williamson had drawn for, but I never entertained any doubts of his integrity, ability, or good intentions, and I shall certainly be very glad to see him when he comes over. Some persons in America, he says, had impressed him in a belief that he had everything to apprehend from me, if he came to England, than which nothing could be more untrue, and I can in no way account for it. I feel myself much obliged to Mr. Troup for the letter he took the trouble to write me on my affairs, and the interest he takes in Mr. Williamson is very satisfactory to me."

But if the disappointment to Williamson was keen, the blow to Bath caused by his resignation was severe. The event was deplored by all the settlers in the country. No man was more greatly loved and respected. At the very time when circumstances compelled him to withdraw from his trust he was engaged in furthering the cause of education and in pushing forward improvements that promised benefit to struggling humanity. When he gave up the agency many of the things which he had been instrumental in beginning collapsed. The *Bath Gazette* suspended publication; the theatrical company disbanded, and the old theatre fell into ruins; and the famous race-course, for a time, was abandoned, and pines

and scrub oaks covered the track. Many of his old friends and associates migrated from the country and sought homes in other places.

The resignation of the agency, however, did not by any means deprive Williamson of his resources. Apart from the income derived from his late office, he was in possession of several farms, village property in Geneva and Bath, wild lands, mortgages, and much personal estate. He owned the whole of Bluff point, and once contemplated the erection of a magnificent castle on its towering heights. There is a legend among the oldest residenters of Bath that he was wont to ride on horseback along the west shore of Keuka Lake almost as far as Gibson, and then swim his steed bearing him on its back across the lake to his commanding domain.

After his withdrawal from the agency Williamson retired to his mansion at Springfield, in which he had put Major Thornton and his charming wife. Williamson's wife was in Albany much of this time; and it would seem from several letters written about this date that his domestic relations were somewhat strained, probably owing to the difference of temperament and breeding of himself and his wife.

During the next two years he busied himself with

his personal affairs, and for pleasure or business was a frequent visitor at New York and the large cities of the country. On one occasion he made the journey between New York and Bath within a week. He was, as we have seen, fond of entertaining and attending social gatherings. He joined the Free Masons; and his personal account book shows that on November 16, 1802, prior to a visit to England, he gave a supper to the Lodge of Masons at Metcalf's Inn, at an expense of $45·24. In the same year he gave $500 to Canandaigua Academy, and paid $8·14 as his taxes in the town of Bath.

The Thorntons, who were associated with Williamson in his residence at Springfield, retained the mansion until 1806, when Major Thornton died. The mansion with its appurtenances fell into other hands. The purchaser failed and it fell to his creditors, and soon the famous mansion, with its garden and walks showed signs of decay and became a picture of desolation. About the year 1860 the ruins were taken down to give place to a farmhouse which at the present time occupies the site.

Major Thornton had brought with him a few slaves as household servants. He was followed next year by Captain William Helm, a wealthy planter from Virginia,

with his family and a retinue of about forty slaves. Captain Helm purchased a number of farms and set his negroes to cultivate them. He built a fine mansion on the present site of the First National Bank, and lived there in great splendour. He purchased and rebuilt the old grist mill erected by Williamson near the bridge, and engaged John Richardson as miller, who ground the first superfine flour. On the death of his wife he married the widow of Major Thornton, a woman of strong individuality, grace, and attractiveness, who for a time reigned as queen of fashionable society in Bath. Captain Helm entered into large speculations. His money soon gave out and his enterprises failed. Some of his slaves ran away; some were seized by the sheriff and sold to satisfy his creditors, and finally his whole estate vanished. He fell into intemperate habits and his wife left him; and in 1826 he died in poverty in the village of Bath, cared for only by one of his former slaves. His widow, or Madam Thornton, to give her the old name under which she was always spoken of, who through severe experiences passed from being the owner of many slaves and much property and the leader of society to real poverty and need, bore her great reverse of fortune with singular patience and fortitude. "The nearest to complaint which

I can recall," says the Rev. Dr. Miller, "was once her saying, 'I should be very content while I stayed here were I sure of the same fare my old servants always had in my kitchen.'" Latterly she removed to Ogdensburg and died there, supported by a simple faith in Christ as the Resurrection and the Life.

CHAPTER X

WILLIAMSON'S RETURN TO SCOTLAND — DIPLOMATIC SERVICE UNDER THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT—HIS DEATH—TESTIMONIES TO HIS CHARACTER—HIS DESCENDANTS

ILLIAMSON, in 1801, had sent his only surviving daughter, aged eight years, to relations in Scotland to be educated. At the beginning of 1803 he himself sailed for Falmouth, England, and spent the summer in his native country. Old friends of his own and of his family, who held influential positions under Government, brought him into prominent notice, and he had offers of employment in the British Diplomatic Service. A diplomatic appointment at Constantinople he declined; but he seems to have resolved to accept other offers; and, probably for the purpose of disposing of his lands and property, and thus freeing himself from his ties in America, he

returned to Bath within a year. During the next three years he made frequent journeys between England and America ; but at the end of 1806, after the death of Major Thornton, he left the Genesee country for the last time.

His departure was hastened by his being summoned by the English Government to undertake a special commission. On his arrival, he was despatched to Egypt to investigate the condition of affairs in that country, over which Great Britain finally established her protectorate. His report was so carefully and justly drawn that he was publicly thanked in the House of Commons ; and, notwithstanding that it ran counter to his interests, its truthfulness was acknowledged by the Pasha of Egypt, who presented him with a jewelled sword.

In 1808 he was sent by Mr. Pitt with sealed orders to Lord Collingwood, who was then lying off Cadiz ; thence he was sent on some Governmental mission to Cuba. Whatever was the nature of the mission on which he was engaged he performed it with his accustomed wisdom, tact, and delicacy. Again he won the approval of the English Ministry, and was on his way home under promise of receiving the appointment of Governor of one of our dependencies as the reward of his work, when he

was struck down with yellow fever, and died at sea in the fifty-first year of his age.

Thus passed away one of the most laborious, earnest, and companionable of men, at the very time when, having accomplished one great task as a pioneer and town-maker, he had begun to give further evidence of the almost inexhaustible versatility of his gifts by a special aptitude for the more delicate office of the diplomat. What he might have become had Providence willed to spare him longer to the service of his country, it is perhaps difficult to form any estimate; but he had qualifications which might have found a fitting sphere in some high office of State, in which his richly endowed personality would have proved itself an inspiration and a national blessing.

His friend, Colonel Walker, on hearing of his death thus wrote to Mr. William Ellis, Edinburgh: "An extract sent me from an English newspaper announces the death of my friend Colonel Williamson, as having happened on his passage from Havannah to England. It is an event which will be most sincerely lamented by numerous acquaintances in this country who esteemed and loved him."

After his death it was said of him by George M'Clure, who had known him intimately in the early days of Bath:

"He was a perfect gentleman, high-souled and honourable, generous and humane, obliging and courteous to all, whether rich or poor."

Turner, who studied and wrote the early history of the Phelps and Gorham purchase, thus estimated the character of Williamson: "Well educated, possessing more than ordinary social qualities, with a mind improved by travel and association with the best classes of Europe, his society was sought after by the many educated and intelligent men who came to this region in the earliest settlement; and he knew well how to adapt himself to circumstances, and to all classes that went to make up the aggregate of the early adventurers. Changing his habits of life with great ease and facility, he was at home in every primitive cabin—a welcome, cheerful, and contented guest, with words of encouragement for those who were sinking under the hardships of pioneer life, and often ready with substantial aid to relieve their necessities."

In 1830 the Penn Yan *Democrat* said of him: "Colonel Williamson was a gentleman of great worth and enterprise, and his memory will be cherished by the early settlers of this country with every demonstration of respect to which the character of a great and good man is entitled.

Under his agency the settlers experienced the benefits of a liberal and enlightened policy. He was not restrained by those narrow views which covetousness creates in sordid and avaricious men. The rapid settlement and development of the country under his direction was beheld with wonder and admiration. Mills were erected, roads constructed, and every avenue to market opened of which the nature of the country admitted. These, with many other improvements, are both an evidence of his zeal for the prosperity of the settlers, of his unwearied exertions to increase the value of the property confided to his care, and form a striking feature in the history of his administration. No wilderness ever disappeared and became the abode of a numerous population in so short a period as did this under his agency. Oppressing the settlers by exacting the performance of hard and ill-judged contracts, or driving them to despair by incessant demands of compound interest, formed no part of his system. The remuneration of the proprietors from the future ability of the settlers to pay was the leading feature of his policy."

In a later history of Steuben County, published in 1853, G. H. M'Master says : "Captain Williamson was a man of talent, hope, energy, and versatility, generous,

brave of spirit, swift and impetuous of action, of unquestionable discretion in business, a lover of sport and excitement, and well calculated by his temperament and genius to lead the enterprise which had been assigned to his undertaking."

Testimony other than the most favourable there could be none. As no man in the Genesee Tract ever despatched so much and so varied work, or did so much to develop the country, so no one was held in higher honour or the more profoundly respected and admired. Bath still clings to his memory as one of its dearest possessions, a perennial source of inspiration to those who now enjoy the fruit of his labours to maintain untarnished the inheritance he bequeathed, and to further the progress of the civilisation which he introduced.

Colonel Williamson had two brothers—John Hope, a captain in the British Army, and David Robertson, who afterwards became a Judge of the Court of Session under the title of Lord Balgray.

Lord Balgray married his cousin, Williamina Boyd, who was heiress of her uncle, General Robertson, from whom she inherited the estate of Lawers, in Perthshire, Scotland.

Mrs. Williamson, the Colonel's wife, continued to

reside in Geneva, Ontario, after her husband's departure from the country and subsequent death, and died there on August 21st, 1824.

Colonel Williamson had three children. (1) Christina, who was born on November 1st, 1786, and died at Bath, on September 27th, 1793; (2) Ann, born about 1792, married, in 1810, to David S. Buchanan, Esquire of Cunninghamhead in Ayrshire, and died after 1826; and (3) Charles Alexander, who was born on November 12th, 1794.

Charles Alexander lived with his mother in Geneva, Ontario, until he was about fourteen years of age, when he was sent to Scotland for his education, and was boarded with a Doctor Fleming in Edinburgh, in 1808. About the year 1828 he married Miss Catharine Clark, of New York, and resided for some time afterwards at Geneva. In the following year he brought his wife to Scotland to visit his relations. Her beauty and amiable character soon won for herself the affection of her husband's family, and the remembrance of her still lingers lovingly in the hearts of those who knew her.

Mrs. Charles A. Williamson had an only brother, Bayard Clark, who was in the diplomatic service, and a charming sister, Isabella, who married Mr. Cochrane,

a gentleman of Nova Scotia. These seem to have been the only remaining members of the Clark family, and they had much monied interest in the Docks of New York.

About 1836, Charles Alexander Williamson removed his family to Scotland, and made his home there. In the height of the gold fever of 1849 he returned again to America, landed at St. Louis, and started for California. But before his operations could be proceeded with, he was taken suddenly ill of cholera at Fort Leavenworth, on the Rocky Mountains, and died there in May of the same year. He was nursed by Red Indians, who sent his watch and last letter to Scotland. He had left his wife in a delicate state of health in Edinburgh, where she died contemporaneously with her husband, and it is said that they were buried at the same time, the husband at Fort Leavenworth, the wife at Monzievaird, in Perthshire. Many years afterwards the body of Charles Alexander Williamson was brought home by his son and, with tender, filial affection, laid at rest in the quiet churchyard of Monzievaird, by the side of his wife Catherine.

They had five daughters and a son born to them. Their son, David Robertson, was born in Geneva, on

February 13th, 1830. He married Selina Maria, daughter of the first Baron Tredegar, and they have one son, Charles David Robertson.

David Robertson Williamson resides at Lawers, Perthshire, Scotland, where he owns and occupies the Robertson estate.

CHAPTER XI

THE SUBSEQUENT HISTORY OF BATH

THE history of Bath, subsequent to the labours of Williamson, and owing to the splendid foundation of future progress which he laid, is, with a single outstanding exception, a history of almost unbroken prosperity. It would be outside the purpose of this book to give a detailed record of how, during the first hundred years of its existence, it reached its present flourishing condition; but the following notes on its progress may serve to indicate some of the landmarks of its history.

During the commercial depression which was felt in other places of America in the first ten years of the nineteenth century, Bath was able to maintain itself against retrogression, owing to the large amount of business transacted at the Land Office, the long and

frequent sessions of the Courts, and the better cultivation and improvement of the lands in its immediate neighbourhood.

From William Howell, who came to Bath in 1811, we learn that in that year the only streets in Bath were Morris, Liberty, and West Steuben, from Pulteney Square to its junction with Morris Street. In those streets there were some fifty or sixty houses, besides buildings of a public character, such as the court-house and gaol, the theatre and school. There was also a bridge across the river, and near it were a grist-mill and distillery, and saw-mills for the timber trade. This was practically the state of the village as Williamson left it, and, small though the place was, it represented even then a marvellous transformation from the time, eighteen years before, when Williamson first began his labours on the unbroken forest.

In 1821 the progress of civilisation was marked by the establishment of a half-weekly stage between Bath and Owego. The stage was a two-seated lumber waggon drawn by two horses, and was the only public conveyance to and from Bath until 1825, when a magnificent four-horse Tray coach was started to run daily to Owego, Rochester, and Angelica. This mode of

conveyance was a great advance, for by it passengers could reach New York in three days and three nights, instead of in more than seven days by the old conveyances.

The stage-coaches, in course of time, were superseded by the packet boats, which ran night and day, served meals on board, had berths, and made better time; but in 1833 these were in turn superseded by the railways, which largely annihilated distance by reducing the time of travelling to a minimum.

The first brick house in the village and county was built by Colonel Bull, in the summer of 1824. In the next year the first block of brick stores were erected on the east side of Liberty Street; and in 1827 the old wooden court-house, erected by Colonel Williamson on the east side of Pulteney Square, was taken down and replaced by a large two-storey one of brick.

The Steuben County Bank was incorporated on March 9, 1832, under a charter running thirty years, with a capital of $150,000.

In 1836 a spirit of speculation similar to that of 1796-97 prevailed throughout the country. Buffalo was the centre of it nearest to Bath. Many of the citizens of Bath caught the fever of excitement, and migrated. Some

took up their residence in Buffalo, and remained long enough to reap a profit ; but those who were left in Bath suffered sorely from the depopulation. For several years afterwards the village felt the effects, and few, if any, improvements were made. It was the one break in the line of the prosperity of Bath, An act incorporating the village had been adopted in 1816, but apparently no steps had been taken to complete the organisation. Now, in the hope of checking the decadence, a new act of incorporation was obtained from the Legislature in May 6, 1836. The revival of prosperity took some time, but the efforts then made were largely successful, and by the charter obtained in that period of depression, as amended from time to time, the village is still governed.

The canals which were opened to the north diverted the currents of trade from Bath, and destroyed the anticipations which Williamson and others had entertained of the greater growth of the town as a commercial centre. When the Erie railway was in progress the people revived their hopes, and looked to it as the means whereby those former expectations might be realised. But, unfortunately, the line was diverted to the Canisteo valley, Bath was set aside, and the greater benefits that otherwise would have been hers passed to Corning and Hornellsville.

In 1841 the town still bore evidence of the period of depression through which it had passed. "The public squares and streets were open pastures, ungraded, unenclosed, and unadorned. There was not a shade tree, except a few scraggy Lombardy poplars on the southwest corner of Pulteney Square. That now beautiful piece of ground was then rough and uneven; well-trod paths crossed it in every direction; vagrant cows grazed on it; 'mendicant swine' rooted and wallowed in soft places, and squawking geese pastured there. It also served as a parade ground for the militia at their annual trainings. Caravans and circuses pitched their tents where the ground was smooth enough to admit of it. There were no side-walks. The streets were as uneven as a rail-fence, intersected by mud-holes, and bordered by ponds. Such was the state of the village in 1841."

But about that time several country villages in the States began to beautify their public grounds and streets by grading and planting shade-trees. A movement was set afoot for the much-needed improvement of Bath. But the movement was opposed by a number of the older citizens on the ground of expense. It was taken up enthusiastically, however, by the bachelors of the town, who secured a majority on the Board of Trustees, and in a

short time a great change for the better was made in the condition of things. The streets were repaired and improved, two beautiful parks were laid out, the avenues and streets were embellished with a magnificent border of shade-trees, and Bath was made worthy of its traditions.

From that time its continued prosperity was secure; and, as the years passed by, greater and lasting improvements were effected. The old primitive style of buildings gradually disappeared; and to-day Bath is rich in elegant residences and large business facilities, a superior educational institution, and a valuable free library; religion is represented by six handsome churches, and charity has erected a home for orphans, and an extensive home for soldiers. The members of the medical profession who now practise there are men distinguished for their skill and for their devotion to a great science which seeks both to cure and prevent the ills of humanity. No other village in the State of New York can claim as her sons so many lawyers who have been eminent for their ability on the Bench and at the Bar. Her clergy are esteemed for their piety and faithfulness; and the local press is well represented by four newspapers of established reputation.

If Bath has not quite realised all that Williamson hoped for it, it has, nevertheless, attained to a worthy

condition of which its citizens are justly proud. It has a noble history, a prosperous present, and a hopeful future. Looking back on the record of a hundred years, it was a proud boast to be able to say, as was said of it in the Centennial Oration, that it is a record "of public order, of reverence for law, of sincere regard for the institutions of religion, of devotion to the duties of citizenship, of a pure and healthy social life." And the crown of Williamson's labours is indicated by the testimony that Bath, erected on the forest clearing which he laid bare, and which owes to his wisdom and foresight the foundation of its subsequent prosperity, "is now a beautiful town, a suburb of great cities, sharing with them most of the good they possess, but exempt from most that is bad, sure to continue the seat of county dignity so long as the State and its county system shall remain."

CHAPTER XII

THE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

AT the Annual Dinner of the local Board of Trade Mr. Anthony L. Underhill, referring in a speech to the approaching centenary of Bath, made the first public appeal to the citizens for a suitable recognition of this important event in the history of the village. The idea thus suggested bore fruit. On August 1, 1892, a "Round Robin," numerously signed by leading citizens under the inspiration of General William W. Averell, was sent to the Hon. Ansel J. M'Call, requesting him, as pre-eminently the most fitted for the purpose, to prepare as a necessity to a fitting celebration of the event an historic sketch of the first hundred years of Bath and Steuben County. Judge M'Call returned a favourable answer to the request.

At first nothing more than this historical monograph was contemplated, but the centennial spirit so grew and enthusiasm for the occasion so increased that it was finally resolved that an effort should be made to hold a public celebration of the one hundredth anniversay of the settlement of the village. For this purpose a meeting of the citizens of Bath was called for Friday evening, January 13, 1893, at which a committee was appointed to carry the project into effect. The Committee energetically took the matter in hand; the dates for the celebration were fixed for the 4th, 6th, and 7th June, and an official programme of events was prepared.

Meanwhile a deputation from Bath, consisting of James M'Call, Esq., and James Robie Kingsley, Esq., arrived at Lawers, Perthshire, Scotland, to acknowledge, in presence of Colonel David R. Williamson of Lawers, the national services to America rendered by his grandfather. As the result of that visit Col. D. R. Williamson sent as a gift to the Trustees of Bath an oil painting of Charles Williamson, copied from a miniature in his possession, which the visitors had seen. It was resolved that the formal presentation of this portrait should form a prominent feature of the centennial celebration.

Preparations for the occasion were elaborately made.

Every building within the corporation limits had some sort of holiday token upon it. Flags and bunting were everywhere. Enthusiasm was unstinted. A committee of ladies arranged for a Loan Exhibition of valuable curios and relics, and designed a centennial spoon, bearing an accurate likeness of the Countess of Bath, as a souvenir of the festival. From far and near the children of Bath came by hundreds to the home of their earlier days to commemorate the energy and chivalry of Charles Williamson and join in the general rejoicing; and with ideal weather and under the most favourable circumstances the celebration was signalised with the greatest success.

The celebration began on Sunday, 4th June, with appropriate religious services and historical sermons in the local churches at 10.30 a.m., and a united religious service in the Casino at 7.30 p.m., at which an address was delivered by Prof. Miller, LL.D., on "The Church in the Community."

On Monday, 5th June, in anticipation of the presentation of the portrait of Charles Williamson, the following petition of the Board of Trustees was presented to the County Court:—

"In the matter of the application of the BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE VILLAGE OF BATH to hang the portrait of

CAPTAIN CHARLES WILLIAMSON

in the COURT-HOUSE at the village of BATH,

The petition of the Board of Trustees of the village of Bath, N.Y., respectfully shows:

That David Robertson Williamson, of Crieff, Scotland, has presented to the Board of Trustees of the village of Bath a portrait of his grandfather, Captain Charles Williamson, the founder of the village of Bath.

Your petitioners further show that they are about to accept said portrait on the part of said village, and that your petitioners are desirous of securing a suitable place to hang the same, and therefore pray that the same may be permitted to be hung in the Court-Room of the Court-House of the village of Bath.

Dated, Bath, N.Y., June 5th, 1893.

(Signed) THOMAS SHANNON,

Clerk of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Bath, N.Y."

The answer to the petition was in the following terms:

"At a term of the County Court, held at the Court-House in the Village of Bath, N.Y., on the 5th day of June, 1893.

Present—

Hon. Harlo Hakes, County Judge.

In the matter of the application of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Bath, to hang the portrait of

Captain Charles Williamson

in the Court-House in the Village of Bath.

Whereas a petition of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Bath, showing that a portrait of Capt. Charles Williamson has been presented by his grandson, David Robertson Williamson, of Crieff, Scotland, and praying for leave to hang the said portrait in the Court-House at Bath, having been presented to this Court, and,

Whereas, Capt. Charles Williamson was the founder of the Village of Bath, and did more to accomplish the settlement of Western New York and of the County of Steuben than any other person, and,

Whereas, Capt. Charles Williamson was the first Judge of the Court of Common Pleas and General Sessions of the County of Ontario, from which the County

of Steuben was set off, to which office he was appointed by Governor George Clinton in 1794, and,

WHEREAS, CAPT. CHARLES WILLIAMSON built the first Court-House in Steuben County, which Court-House was erected upon the site of the present one in the Village of Bath, and stood until 1826, and,

WHEREAS, CAPT. CHARLES WILLIAMSON was the first Member of Assembly from Steuben County and served four successive terms, and,

WHEREAS, CAPT. CHARLES WILLIAMSON was a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Militia of the State of New York,

NOW, therefore, on motion of LUCIUS A. WALDO, of Counsel for the Board of Trustees of the Village of Bath, it is ORDERED that said Board of Trustees be permitted to hang said portrait of CAPT. CHARLES WILLIAMSON in the Court-Room of the Court-House in the Village of Bath, as long as said Board of Trustees or its successors in office may desire.

(Signed) HARLO HAKES,
Steuben County Judge.

Entered June 5th, 1893.

(A Copy.)

J. A. CONRAY,
Dep.-Clerk."

On Tuesday, June 6th, the second day of the celebration, a meeting was held in the Casino at two p.m., at which, after prayer, an Address of Welcome was given by Reuben E. Robie, Esq., the President; a Centennial Poem was read by Zenas L. Parker; a Sketch of the Life and Work of Charles Williamson was given by James M'Call, Esq.; and a History of Bath for Fifty Years by the Hon. Ansel J. M'Call. In the same place, at 7.30 p..m, a Symposium was held, at which Reminiscences were given by several distinguished sons of Bath, and for which interesting papers were prepared on the Schools, Physicians, Lawyers, Editors, and Soldiers of the Village.

Wednesday, June 7th, was the crowning day of the *fête*. It had been arranged that the portrait of Charles Williamson should be presented in presence of the great assembly in the morning, and that a Grand Parade of the Fire Department, Civic Societies, and General Trades should take place in the afternoon.

At sunrise a Salute of Cannon and Bells was performed. The Exercises of the morning took place on the Fair Grounds, there being no building in the village of sufficient capacity to accommodate the thousands of citizens and strangers who were present to participate in them.

At ten o'clock a Procession, numbering more than a thousand, of the children of all the Schools of the town was mustered under the direction of Clarence Willis, Esq., and, headed by five bands, marched in procession to the Grounds, where they completely filled the Grand Stand.

At 10.30 a.m. the proceedings at the Fair Grounds began. After prayer by the Chaplain—Rev. M. A. Preston—the children united in singing the following song, which had been specially written for the occasion by General Averell, the Chairman of the Centennial Committee :—

Where pioneers undaunted
Left homes and kindred dear,
Sought wilds with danger haunted,
Now happy roof-trees rear,
Our homes beloved are here.

Where perils aye beset them,
And toils untried, severe,
Shall we for aye forgot them?
Not while our homes are here,
Our homes beloved are here.

Their legends shall not perish,
Of trials, want, and care,
Their relics proudly cherish,
And keep like jewels rare,
In homes beloved while here.

And as each generation
Shall pass with smile or tear,
Let every consecration
Exalt the pioneer
In homes beloved then here.

Letters of apology for absence from the Authorities of State and Nation were then read by the Secretary; after which Mr. Robie, the President of the proceedings, in a few graceful words, introduced Mr. James M'Call to present, on behalf of Colonel David R. Williamson, to the village of Bath the portrait of its noted founder.

Mr. M'Call, in making the presentation, gave the following interesting speech :—

"Go back to 1793, June 7. It is Friday. The busy villagers are still discussing the news of the second inauguration of George Washington, the coalition formed by Pitt against France, and the violent death meted out to Louis XVI. by the French Revolutionists, accounts of which are contained in a well-thumbed New York newspaper brought in last evening by Benjamin Patterson. From the broad-mouthed chimney of the small log-house, which dots the little clearing south of Pulteney Square, rises a curling blue column of smoke delicately outlined against the dark green background of South Hill. The sun cannot yet shoot his rays into the clearing, and the odour of pine and

fir sweetens the air. The rough-hewn door of that log building opens, and out of it walks a tall, slender man of thirty-five. He is erect, and has the manly bearing of a soldier and the carriage of a courtier. Beneath a broad-brimmed felt hat looks out a smooth-shaven countenance that would remind you of Robert Burns. Upon his brow is the mark of Scottish frankness, Scottish vigour, and Scottish grit. Across his features is the play of humour and the smile of gentility. Clad in a cutaway coat, velvet waistcoat, buckskin knee-breeches, and high-topped boots, whip in hand, he strides towards the well-groomed bay mare which, saddled and bridled, stands in charge of faithful Michael. With the grace and agility of a cavalier he vaults lightly into the saddle, and, casting an eagle eye over the busy woodsmen and builders, gallops off through the cuttings of Morris Street for Canandaigua.

"That man is the Pole Star of the great Genesee country. It is his head that has planned the development of this new region. It is in pursuance of his orders that these men are labouring in this clearing; others checking the Conhocton with a dam two miles above; those working in that highway between Dansville and Williamsburgh; and others still building Durham boats at Northumberland. To him apply all strangers searching for new homes;

upon him are poured the complaints of those whose lack of thrift and hatred of work have led to bad harvests; in him is to be found the sympathy of a fellow-Scotsman and the generosity of a comrade in the British service; and upon him depends the success of all industrial improvements and all social gatherings. He must be in New York or Albany this week buying new supplies or settling with his banker; next week he must be in Bath entertaining some English traveller or French exile; the week after he must go to Williamsburgh to parley with the Indians or remonstrate with the Germans; and before the month is out he must inspect the improvements on his farm at Geneva, and write long letters to his principals in England. To successfully accomplish all this required a man of wonderful versatility and endurance. Such this young man we have just seen dashing through the woods proved himself to be.

"His position as agent, with the fullest of powers, was indeed unique and important; his opportunities for experiments with men and nature were many, and his manner of life exceedingly fascinating.

"Jerome has wrought on canvas a wonderful picture of Napoleon standing alone in the African desert and contemplating the herculean labour represented in the

Sphinx and the Pyramid of Cheops. And it has been said that he who makes two blades of grass grow where one grew is mightier than the conqueror of armies. Have you ever thought what a stupendous work it was to transform Western New York from a dense forest into fertile farms?

"This same young man sternly braved the dangers and stoutly bore the toils that he might lay the foundation of this pyramid of industry. Ere this you must have guessed the name of this 'Baron of the Backwoods.' It is Captain Charles Williamson, and his features are now before you.

"As a matter of explanation and a condensation of the remarks of yesterday, I will simply add that Colonel Charles Williamson had two children who survived him—Charles A. and Ann. Charles A. Williamson resided in this country for a long time, and married a Miss Clark, of Rochester. They had several children, the oldest of whom is David Robertson Williamson, of Crieff, Scotland.

"In the foot-hills of the Scottish Highlands, in that fair county of Perth, where the broad and fertile valley of the Earn leads from Crieff to the gray-topped mountain of Ben Vorlich, which looks down into the clear waters of Loch Earn, stands Lawers House, a handsome white

building, the ancient seat of the Robertson family. Set in a background of beeches and oaks, which fill to the top the sloping hillside, the ancestral home looks to the southward down a broad avenue of greensward bordered by stately oaks, and extending unbroken across the valley. From the hospitable porch we see sleek cattle grazing in the meadows, swans are floating in the curling-pond below, a small lodge is to the left, a handsome little family house to the right, trim hedges of thorn, a few maples whose seed came from the Genesee valley, pretty driveways which circle through the grounds, a neat chapel in the distance, while a clock in the quaint belfry at the western extremity of the big house marks the hour of day. That is now the home of David Robertson Williamson, Esq. He is a worthy scion of a most distinguished grandfather—a leading gentleman of his county, foremost in every industrial enterprise, honoured and revered by the country wide, a good shot, and an expert horseman. When I saw him last October he appeared greatly interested in hearing of the present condition of Steuben, and pleased to learn that his grandfather and himself were not forgotten in the land of his birth.

"In this little pocket memorandum, which has bravely stood the ravages of ninety years, is a short entry made

in the small handwriting of Charles Williamson just as he was about to sail for England. It reads: 'Jny. 5, 1803. Paid Mr. Robinson for my miniature, $30. Paid for setting same, $30.' That miniature was a farewell gift to his charming friend, Madam Thornton, and remained in her possession in this village until 1810, when she kindly presented it to his daughter, Ann, in Scotland; and the country for which he had done so much, and to which he had given the best years of his life, was left without an image of his kindly face. That miniature now hangs among the ancestral portraits in the grand staircase of Lawers House, and opposite is a large bust portrait in oil, painted probably about 1790. We endeavoured to obtain a photograph of this, and the genial Mr. Williamson promised to assist us. Imagine my surprise when, after some correspondence, the following letter, teeming with the politeness and generosity of the writer, was received:—

"'LAWERS, PERTHSHIRE, SCOTLAND,
TREGEDAR LAWERS, CRIEFF, N.B.,
1st May, 1893.

"'To James M'Call, Esq., Bath, U.S.A.

"'MY DEAR SIR,—I send from this place to-morrow, as my gift to the trustees of the village of Bath, an oil-

painting copied from the portrait of my grandfather, Colonel Charles Williamson. The said painting I hope the trustees will place in the Free Library or the Court-house, or in any similar building that the trustees may consider suitable. I may remind you that you saw the original portrait of my grandfather within Lawers House. And I pointed out to you the valuable sword presented to my grandfather by the Pasha of Egypt of that day for the important service given; and for the satisfactory political results following my grandfather's mission to Egypt he received the thanks of England's House of Commons. My grandfather had the reputation in this country of being a brave and chivalrous soldier; his regiment was the 25th (and one of his great-grandsons is now an officer in that regiment, and was wounded in the last Egyptian war).

"'My grandfather was last sent on a commission by the British Government to report of the state of Havana, and, while returning to England, he was smitten with yellow fever, and died at sea, A.D. 1808. My grandfather was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, on July 12, 1757. I showed you my grandfather's watch, which I generally wear. I will look over some of my grandfather's papers, and, if I find memoranda of interest, I will send you copies

of the same. I have before me a work of two volumes, 'Travels through North America,' by the Duke de la Rochefoucault. In that work my grandfather is most honourably mentioned, published A.D. 1799. Of my grandfather's life in America you know probably more than I do. In answer to your complimentary suggestion in letter, 21st March, 1893, you must excuse me saying anything about myself.—I am, very truly yours,

"'(Signed) DAVID R. WILLIAMSON.'

"Would that the distinguished donor were standing in my place to charm you with his manners, as I know he would, and to observe the widespread feeling of gratitude which I am sure is welling up in your breasts, to be thus honoured by his gift. I confidently trust that you will treasure it as a precious souvenir, and place it in some safe depository, where the men, women, and children of this generation, and those that come after, can look upon those manly features and draw inspiration, energy, and reverence from that good face.

"Without further remarks, I therefore have the honour, on behalf of David Robertson Williamson, Esq.,

to present to the Trustees of the village of Bath, the portrait of its founder, its citizen, and its friend."

Mr. Byron L. Smith, who accepted the gift on behalf of the corporate authorities of the village, said:

"It gives me great pleasure, on behalf of the Trustees of this village, and on behalf of the citizens of Bath, to accept from Mr. M'Call, the representative of David Robertson Williamson, this splendid painting and memorial of his ancestor, and the founder of this village, Captain Charles Williamson.

"We have assembled here to-day to commemorate his work and its results, and to hear from others fitting tribute in historical detail to the fruits of his great undertaking, and to listen to a recital of the perils he encountered and the difficulties he overcame. Surrounded by the monuments of a new civilisation, the wide streets, the brick blocks, the comfortable dwellings of our citizens, it is hard to conceive the courage and powers of endurance which the founding of a settlement in the heart of a wilderness required a hundred years ago.

"The example set by the man whose lineaments are traced upon this picture may well encourage us all to beautify, to build up, and make more prosperous this village of Bath. We accept this friendly gift in the

same warm spirit with which it is tendered to us. We honour the ancestor, and extend most hearty greetings to his generous descendant who has so kindly remembered us on this occasion."

The gift thus received is kept as a treasured possession, as the following minute of a meeting of the Board of Trustees clearly shows:—

> "At a Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Bath, N.Y., held in the office of the Village Clerk, on the 23rd day of August, 1893. Present—Talcott W. Gould, *President;* B. L. Smith, *Trustee;* E. E. Aber, *ditto;* O. W. Sutton, *ditto;* W. H. Phillips, *ditto:*
>
> It was resolved on the motion of Trustee Smith:
>
> Whereas Colonel Charles Williamson is entitled to credit for the beautiful location of Bath village, and also for the early development of Western New York:
>
> Therefore be it resolved that we will always treasure the splendid gift with deep feelings of reverence, not only for the founder of our village, but also for his grandson; and that as a further token of our esteem

the said painting of Colonel Charles Williamson be hung in the Court-House of the said village.

(Signed) T. W. Gould, *President.*
Thomas Shannon, *Clerk.*"

Following the interesting ceremony of the presentation of the portrait, a Centennial Oration was delivered by the Hon. Sherman S. Rogers. At the close of Mr. Roger's oration, the Rev. Benjamin S. Sanderson rose and said :

"It is to be regretted that in the selection of names for the various landmarks of our beautiful village that of our founder should have been passed over. I am authorised, by the General Committee of the Centennial, to propose the following resolution, as the formal close of our public literary exercises :

"*Resolved*, That, in grateful recognition of the well-planned labours of Colonel Charles Williamson, the name of Lake Salubria be hereby changed to Lake Williamson."

The resolution was received with hearty applause, and was unanimously carried ; and with the Parade in the afternoon, and an Old Time Reception in the evening, the celebration of the First Centennial of Bath came to an end.

Charles Williamson

It was a fitting tribute to one whom the people of Bath have great cause to honour; and the tribute was the expression of a deep-seated and lasting sentiment. The legacy which the past has transmitted to the present can never exhaust the gratitude of those who now enjoy the ripened fruit of the toils and sacrifices of the men who transformed the wilderness into the home of civilisation. And of these men the highest niche in the temple of honour and fame erected in the grateful hearts of the people of Bath must be assigned to Charles Williamson, the able administrator and wise leader, the fearless pioneer and patient worker, the man of superlative gifts and graces, whose example of integrity and dauntless endeavour must ever be an inspiration to those who know the record of his work and worth, and whose best memorial is to be found in that which he has done :

"Si monumentum quæris, circumspice."

APPENDIX

THE SODUS SETTLEMENT DISPUTE—LETTERS ON THE CRISIS BY PRESIDENT GEORGE WASHINGTON AND SECRETARY RANDOLPH

HE following letters are interesting not only on account of the high standing of their writers, but also as supplementing the information given in Chapter V. regarding the British encroachments.

President Washington thus wrote to Mr. Jay, the American Minister in London:

"*August* 30, 1794.

"As you will receive letters from the Secretary of State's Office giving an official account of the public occurrences as they have arisen and advanced, it is unnecessary for me to retouch any of them; and yet I cannot restrain myself from making some observations on the most recent of them, the communication of which was received this morning only. I mean the protest

of the Governor of Upper Canada, delivered by Lieutenant Sheaffe, against our occupying lands far from any of the posts which long ago they ought to have surrendered, and far within the known and until now the acknowledged limits of the United States.

"On this irregular and high-handed proceeding of Mr. Simcoe, which is no longer masked, I would rather hear what the Ministry of Great Britain will say than pronounce my own sentiments thereon. But can that Government, or will it attempt to, after this official act of their Governor, hold out ideas of friendly intentions towards the United States, and suffer such conduct to pass with impunity?

"This may be considered as the most open and daring act of the British Agents in America, though it is not the most hostile and cruel; for there does not remain a doubt in the mind of any well-informed person in this country, not shut against conviction, that all the difficulties we encounter with the Indians, their hostilities, the murders of the helpless women and children along our frontiers, result from the conduct of agents of Great Britain in this country. In vain is it, then, for its Administration in Britain to disavow having given orders which will warrant such conduct, whilst their agents go

unpunished, while we have a thousand corroborating circumstances, and indeed as many evidences, some of which cannot be brought forward, to prove that they are seducing from our alliances, and endeavouring to remove over the line, tribes that have hitherto been kept in peace and friendship with us at a heavy expense, and who have no causes of complaint except pretended ones of their own creating; whilst they keep in a state of irritation the tribes that are hostile to us, and are instigating those who know little of us as we of them to unite in the war against us; and whilst it is an undeniable fact that they are furnishing the whole with arms, ammunition, clothing, and even provisions to carry on the war. I might go further, and, if they are not much belied, add, men also in disguise.

"Can it be expected, I ask, so long as these things are known in the United States, or at least firmly believed, and suffered with impunity by Great Britain, that there ever will or can be any cordiality between the two countries? I answer, NO. And I will undertake, without the gift of prophecy, to predict that it will be impossible to keep this country in a state of amity with Great Britain long if these posts are not surrendered. A knowledge of these being my sentiments would have

but little weight, I am persuaded, with the British Administration or perhaps with the nation in effecting the measures; but both may rest satisfied that, if they want to be at peace with this country, and to enjoy the benefits of its trade, to give up the posts is the only road to it. If they are withheld, and if the consequences we feel at present continue, war will be inevitable."

Secretary Randolph thus wrote to the Honourable George Hammond, Minister Plenipotentiary of His Britannic Majesty:

"PHILADELPHIA,
"*1st September*, 1794.

"SIR,—If on the information upon which my letter of the 20th May was founded any considerable doubt has remained of Governor Simcoe's invasion, your long silence without a refutation of it, and our more recent intelligence forbid us to question its truth. It is supported by the respectable opinions, which have been since transmitted to the Executive, that, in the late attack on Fort Recovery, British officers and British soldiers were on the very ground aiding our Indian enemies.

"But, Sir, as if the Governor of Upper Canada was resolved to destroy every possibility of disbelieving

his hostile views, he has sent to the Great Sodus—a settlement begun on a bay of the same name on Lake Ontario—a command to Captain Williamson, who derives a title from the State of New York, to desist from his enterprise. This mandate was borne by a Lieutenant Sheaffe under a military escort, and in its tone corresponds with the form of its delivery, being one generally of a military and hostile nature. It was in the following terms:

"'I am commanded to declare that, during the inexecution of the treaty of peace between Great Britain and the United States, and until the existing differences respecting it shall be mutually and finally adjusted, taking possession of any part of the Indian territory, either for the purposes of war or sovereignty, is held to be a direct violation of His Britannic Majesty's rights as they unquestionably existed before the treaty, and has an immediate tendency to interrupt, and, in its progress, to destroy that good understanding which has hitherto subsisted between His Britannic Majesty and the United States of America. I therefore require you to desist from any such aggression.

"'R. H. Sheaffe,

"'*Lieu. Qr.-Mr.-Genl. Dept. of His*

"'*Britannic Majesty's Service.*'

"Captain Williamson being from home, a letter was written to him by Lieutenant Sheaffe in the following words:

"'SODUS,

"'*August* 16, 1794.

"'SIR,—Having a special commission and instructions for that purpose from the Lieutenant-Governor of His Britannic Majesty's Province of Upper Canada, I have come here to demand by what authority an establishment has been ordered at this place, and to require that such a design be immediately relinquished for the reasons stated in the written declarations accompanying this letter, for the receipt of which protest I have taken an acknowledgment of your agent, Mr. Little. I regret exceedingly in my private as well as public character that I have not the satisfaction of seeing you here; but I hope on my return, which will be about a week hence, to be more fortunate. I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

"'R. H. SHEAFFE,

"'*Lt., 5th Regt., Q.-M.-G. D.*'

"The position of Sodus is represented to be seventy miles within the territorial line of the United States,

about twenty from Oswego, and about one hundred from Niagara.

"For the present all causes of discontent not connected with our western territory shall be laid aside; and even among these shall not be revived the root of our complaints—the detention of the posts. But while peace is sought by us through every channel which honour permits, the Governor of Upper Canada is accumulating irritation upon irritation. He commenced his operations of enmity at the rapids of the Miami. He next associated British with Indian force to assault our fort. He now threatens us, if we fell our own trees and build houses on our own lands. To what length may not Governor Simcoe go? Where is the limit to the sentiment which gave birth to these instructions? Where is the limit of the principle which Governor Simcoe avows?

"The treaty and all its appendages we have submitted to fair discussion more than two years ago. To the letter of my predecessor, of the 29th May, 1792, you have not been pleased to make a reply, except that on the 20th June, 1793, the 22nd Nov., 1793, and the 21st February, 1794, you wrote that no instructions had arrived from your Court. To say the best of this suspension, it certainly cannot warrant any new encroachments,

howsoever it may recommend to us forbearance under the old.

"It is not for the Governors of His Britannic Majesty to interfere with the measures of the United States towards the Indians within their territory. You cannot, Sir, be insensible that it has grown into a maxim that the affairs of the Indians within the boundaries of any nation exclusively belong to that nation. But Governor Simcoe, disregarding this right of the United States, extends the line of usurpation in which he marches by referring to the ancient and extinguished rights of His Britannic Majesty. For, if the existing condition of the treaty keeps them alive on the southern side of Lake Ontario, the Ohio itself will not stop their career.

"You will pardon me, Sir, if, under those excuses of Governor Simcoe, I am not discouraged by your having formerly disclaimed a control over, and a responsibility for, the Governors of His Britannic Majesty, from resorting to you on this occasion. You are addressed from a hope that, if he will not be restrained by your remonstrances, he may at least be apprised through you of the consequences of self-defence.

"I have the honour to be, etc.,

"EDM. RANDOLPH."

To this letter of Secretary Randolph, Mr. Hammond replied, under date New York, September 3, 1794, that he should transmit copies of Mr. Randolph's letter by the earliest opportunity to General Simcoe and His Majesty's Ministers in England.

THE END.

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